Symbolic Capital and the Reproduction of Inequality in Today's China

DISSERTATION

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)

im Fach Soziologie

eingereicht an der
Kultur-, Sozial-, und Bildungswissenschaftliche Fakultät der
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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Datum der Verteidigung: 9. September 2019

Zusammenfassung

Die Dissertation beschäftigt sich mit der Legitimität von Ungleichheit und ihren Auswirkungen in China seit Beginn der Reformen in den 1970er Jahren. Bisherige Studien legen nahe, dass die Akzeptanz von Ungleichheit soziokulturellen Ursprungs ist und durch die wahrgenommene Stabilität des Klassensystems erhalten wird. Darauf basierend versucht die Dissertation herauszufinden, ob Ungleichheiten im heutigen China aus dem vergangenen staatssozialistischen System heraus reproduziert werden und wie in diesem Falle diese Reproduktion von Ungleichheit funktioniert.

Die soziokulturelle Perspektive erlaubt eine Interpretation von Ungleichheit als ungleiche Verteilung symbolischen Kapitals, was konkret heißt, dass die strukturelle Ursache für Ungleichheit in der symbolischen Vermittlung menschlichen Handelns liegt. Die symbolische Vermittlung über den *Habitus* wurde von Pierre Bourdieu systematisch untersucht, um die Funktionsweise der Reproduktion von Ungleichheiten zu erklüren. Als Ausdruck der Logik menschlichen Handelns, welches durch Wissen und Erfahrung in einer symbolischen Welt entsteht, organisiert der Habitus das menschliche Handeln, um die Bedingungen seines Entstehens zu reproduzieren.

Im Falle Chinas seit Beginn der Reformpolitik sind Hierarchien des staatssozialistischen Systems in Form von post-transformativen symbolischen Ungleichheiten erhalten geblieben. Diese Strukturen werden in der Dissertation als eine sozialistische Soziokultur definiert, die menschliches Handeln im veränderten Umfeld des Marktes vermittelt. Die sozialistische hierarchische Ordnung differenziert chinesische Bürger entlang der Trennlinien sozialistischen symbolischen Kapitals.

Aufeinander aufbauend kommen sowohl quantitative als auch qualitative empirische Forschungsmethoden zu Anwendung. Die erste statistische Methode ist die *multiple correspondance analysis* (MCA), um die Strukturen der Ungleichheit im heutigen China zu erfassen. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass sowohl im Kontext des urbanen als auch des ländlichen Chinas die Beständigkeit des staatssozialistischen hierarchischen Systems eine wichtige Rolle für die heutige soziale Struktur spielt, ungeachtet der Differenzierung neuer sozialer Klassen. Insbesondere im nicht-urbanen Kontext manifestiert sich das sozialistische hierarchische Vermächtnis deutlich. Auf den Ergebnissen der

quantitativen Forschung aufbauend wurden qualitative Interviews durchgeführt, um Typen des Habitus konstruieren zu können und die hypothetischen Mechanismen zu überprüfen.

Menschliches Handeln wird in der meritokratischen Gesellschaft durch sozialistische hierarchische Vermächtnisse symbolisch ausgehandelt. Gleichzeitig funktioniert die Persistenz des Habitus des staatssozialistischen hierarchischen Systems als unsichtbarer Mechanismus der Reproduktion von Ungleichheiten im China der Reformpolitik.

Schlagwrter: Reform- und Öffnungspolitik; Legitimität von Ungleichheit; Symbolisches Kapital; Staatssozialistischen Hierarchischen Systems; Habitus; Reproduktion von Ungleichheiten

Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the legitimacy of inequality and its causes during the reform period of China. Building on existing findings that the human acceptance of inequality is socioculturally situated and contributed to by the stability of the class system, this study specifically aims to explore whether or not inequality in today's China is reproduced from the historical state-socialist class system and, if so, how the reproduction of inequality happens. The sociocultural perspective allows for the interpretation of inequality as an unequal distribution of symbolic capital, which reveals that the symbolic mediation of human practice is the structural root of inequality. This symbolically mediated practice is called habitus, which has been systematically developed by Pierre Bourdieu and utilized to explain how the reproduction of inequality happens. As the embodied logic of human practice that is acquired from knowledge and experience within a symbolic world, habitus organizes human practice to seek out and reproduce the conditions from which the habitus has developed. With regard to the case of China in this dissertation, some state-socialist hierarchical arrangements are maintained in the form of symbolic inequalities under reform, and are defined together as a socialist socioculture that is hypothesized to mediate human practice in a market environment. These socialist hierarchical arrangements distinguish Chinese citizens along the lines of socialist symbolic capital. Empirically, I use quantitative and qualitative research methods sequentially in this study. First, the multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is adopted as a statistical technique to observe the configuration of inequality in today's China. The results of MCA demonstrate that in both rural and urban China, the persistence of the state-socialist hierarchical system plays an important role in informing the social structure, even with the rise of emerging classes. Particularly, the socialist hierarchical legacies manifest more evident signs in rural society than in urban. Following the findings from the quantitative research, I conduct qualitative interviews in China to construct habitus types for verifying the hypothetical mechanisms. It was found that human practice in a meritocratic society is symbolically mediated by the socialist hierarchical legacies. Meanwhile, the maintenance of habitus acquired from the state-socialist hierarchical system is an invisible mechanism

for reproducing inequality under reform.

Keywords: Chinese Economic Reform; Legitimacy of Inequality; Symbolic Capital; State-Socialist Hierarchical System; Habitus; Reproduction of Inequality

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my supervisor Professor Boike Rehbein, who approved my research throughout my PhD with his kindness, trust, and guidance. I am very thankful that I was invited to join his research group of social inequality and applied this innovative sociocultural approach to the exploration of inequality in China. I have learnt a lot under his supervision, lessons going far beyond academia such as the search for knowledge, the unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind, and the respect for diversity. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Roger Greatrex for providing constructive suggestions on this dissertation and Professor Vincent Houben for joining the committee.

I am very appreciative for the help of Professor Felix Wemheuer. I had a chance to visit Professor Wemheuer several years ago, and I received great encouragement from him. When I was writing my dissertation, Professor Wemheur provided me lots of materials, which was of great help to my dissertation. I am grateful to my colleagues of this inequality research group who have contributed to my PhD study and exchanged valuable views with me over the past years.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Douban, a Chinese networking service website. Through this website, I have made lots of friends who share hobbies and ideologies with me. Douban makes me feel warm because I know I have net pals who always stand for me.

I would like to thank filmmakers Billy Wilder, Roman Polanski, Lou Ye, Bernardo Bertolucci, Jean-Luc Godard, Hong Sang-soo, Lee Chang-dong, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder, whose works have accompanied me these years. Their works have inspired me to deeply think about art, politics, society, history, and human beings, and made me an observer of the changing world. I will always have a dream of being a film maker.

I am thankful to always have the back of my family, particularly my dear parents, my cousin Hui Shao and his fiancée Yue Wu, and my cousin Dr. Kezheng Hu. I am also grateful to my master supervisor Professor Jiwu Yin, my friends Kangrui Wang, Dr. Yuning Guo, Luchan Deng, Supitcha Punya, and Anton. It is very lucky to have your help and encouragement when I encountered difficulties in continuing my dissertation.

Lastly, I would like to thank my fiancé Dr. Meng Zheng, for his love and support during the darkest time of my life. I dedicate this dissertation to him.

Berlin, June 2019

Acknowledgement of Financial Support

This dissertation and the studies were financially supported by a PhD scholarship provided by China Scholarship Council.

Contents

List of Abbreviations

the CCP	the Chinese Communist Party
the PRC	the People's Republic of China
the GDR	the German Democratic Republic
the USSR	the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
the GLP	the Great Leap Forward
TVEs	Township and Village Enterprises
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SDO	Social Dominance Orientation
MCA	Multiple Correspondence Analysis
CGSS	Chinese General Social Survey
SAR	Special Administrative Region

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"Inequality's history includes 'the quarrels of popes and kings, with wars or pestilences, in every page,' but it also includes the daily lives of ordinary people."

Charles Tilly (1998, p.230)

1 Introduction

Inequality is one of the most commonly discussed topics. For countries in transition, changing from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, social inequality seems to be a volcano hidden beneath the new market mechanism. China is one of the countries. As the largest country currently in transition on one hand, China has created a development miracle and has been seen as an engine of world and regional growth since its reform and opening up began in the late 1970s. In the reform period (1978-present), China's economic growth has surpassed the Four Asian Tigers[1], and hundreds of millions of its citizens have been lifted out of poverty (Whyte, 2010b). China has also made great achievements in the development of high-speed rail ways, information and communication technology, and aerospace, for example. On the other hand, the Gini coefficient, which is widely utilized by scholars to measure overall inequality, scored China 38.6 in 2015, reflecting how China has become a society that is very unequal in its income distribution[2].

How do Chinese citizens perceive the inequality? Both Chinese and foreign observers believe that the severe inequality generated by China's reform has inspired anger among ordinary people (Whyte, 2010a). As a response to the problem of social inequality, the concept of the *harmonious society* was developed by the Hu-Wen Administration in the mid-2000s (S. Li, Sato, & Sicular, 2013). This philosophical ideology signifies China's pursuit of the balance between rapid economic development and a stability maintenance regime (D. L. Yang, 2017). In spite of this apparent anger, ordinary Chinese people believe that inequality is inevitable (Xie, Thornton, Wang, & Lai, 2012). Moreover, it has been empirically found that, in China, disadvantaged groups, such as rural citizens, women, and lower class people are more likely to view

[1]East Asian Tigers, also known as Four Asian Dragons, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea.

[2]According to the World Bank website, in 2015, inequality is divided into five levels from very equal to very unequal based on the following scores: <29.4, 29.4-34.2, 34.2-38.6, 38.6-43.4, >43.4;
See: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=CN&type=shaded&view=map&year=2015&year_high_desc=true

the unequal distribution in Chinese society as just and acceptable (Im, 2014).

This dissertation doesn't ask what causes inequality in China in general, but rather concentrates on the social legitimacy of inequality and its causes in today's China. This research therefore addresses a topic that has received little attention by social scientists, which will hopefully encourage us to work more to uncover how the human acceptance of inequality happens in a meritocratic society[3]. In meritocratic societies, most of which are market-driven societies, people are rewarded in keeping with their differential merits, even though the concept of "merit" may have different meanings in different contexts (Swift & Marshall, 1997). The acceptance of inequality concerns two aspects: Firstly, it has been found that perceived longevity increases system justification (e.g., Blanchar & Eidelman, 2013). The practice system that persists with a longstanding structural relation is called *socioculture*, which is responsible for human beliefs of a social order entailed in that relation. Secondly, according to Im (2014), Chinese citizens generally accept the unequal distribution of resources after the reform and opening up, and see the world as a competitive jungle. In this sense, the inequality is legitimized when people feel that the results of meritocratic competition are proper within a sociocultural tradition. I therefore presume that the social stratification under China's market reform is the outcome of merit but reflects a long-lasting order of domination, that is, the legacies of the socialist class system. Based on this presumption, I work to examine the possible link between the legacies of socialist hierarchies and the inequality in today's China.

1.1 Existing Studies on Inequality in China

1.1.1 The Status-Quo of China's Inequality

China's economic reform, in addition to generating rapid economic growth, has been deemed responsible for many negative outcomes, particularly with regard to social inequality. Practically, describing the status-quo of China's inequality requires comprehensively understanding what kinds of inequality are experienced in China. The introduction of a market economy, leading to the emergence of a meritocratic society, moves inequality concerns from those of a redistribution situation to those of a market

[3]In this study, I use "meritocratic society" and "market-oriented society" interchangeably.

situation. In particular, individual opportunities for gain and profit are more broadly based and diverse when market force augments the opportunity structure controlled by the redistributive power (Nee, 1996). As a result, China has simultaneously created a new market-driven social structure that consists of prominent spatial and gender inequalities.

Urban-Rural Inequality Scholars and policy makers generally believe that urban-rural inequality is one of the most severe structural problems to have followed China's economic reform. As the central institutional mechanism defining the city-countryside and the state-society relations, household registration system (*hukou* system) establishes urban-rural citizenship inequality, which provides the principal basis for constructing urban-rural dual structure in China (T. Cheng & Selden, 1994). For a long time, this system has favored urban residents and discriminated against rural residents in socioeconomic resource allocation, which has given rise to rural residents essentially becoming underclass citizens (Afridi, Li, & Ren, 2015). Due to a series of urban-biased policies, citizens who obtain rural *hukou* are less able to access some socioeconomic resources, such as education and healthcare. These restrictions further lower the living standard of rural residents and possibly restrict upward social mobility.

The urban-biased household registration system gradually contributes to urban-rural income inequality. The income inequality between urban and rural has been asserted as the source of the rise in China's Gini index (e.g., Sicular, Ximing, Gustafsson, & Li, 2008; Gustafsson, Shi, & Sicular, 2008). Recent statistical result shows that the urban-rural divide accounts for more than 10% of the total income inequality in China (Xie & Zhou, 2014). In fact, in the opening decade of economic reform (1980s), the urban-rural income gap showed a weak decline, and then started to rise with an increase of 6% by the early 1990s, continuing steadily upward afterwards (Kanbur & Zhang, 1999). In early 21st century, because of the expansion of the urban economy, the urban-rural income gap increased once again (Goodman, 2014). The latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China demonstrated that, in 2016, per capita disposable income of urban households was 33616 *yuan*, nearly three times the per capita disposable income of rural households in 12363 *yuan*.

In addition to this economic situation, there has also been an increase in urban-rural

social inequality with regard to health and education outcomes (X. Zhang & Kanbur, 2005; Dollar, 2007). Marketization grants local governments more responsibilities to develop the social and economic situation to indigenous populations. However, with limited help from the central budget, cutting public spending on education and healthcare often becomes an alternative for local governments that are faced with difficult fiscal situations (X. Zhang & Kanbur, 2005). Disparity in education is a significant indicator for defining urban-rural inequality in China, as education provides opportunities for taking advantage of China's rapid economic development and for raising one's own social status (X. Zhang & Kanbur, 2005). Table 1 presents the levels of illiteracy, comparing urban, town, and rural populations over age 15. The statistical results tell us that, since the economic reform, illiteracy rates of rural China have continuously been much higher than that of urban China. Table 1 reveals a big reduction in illiteracy rate in both rural and urban areas since economic reform. Strikingly, one feature is that in the past three decades, the rural-urban illiteracy gap has been widening.

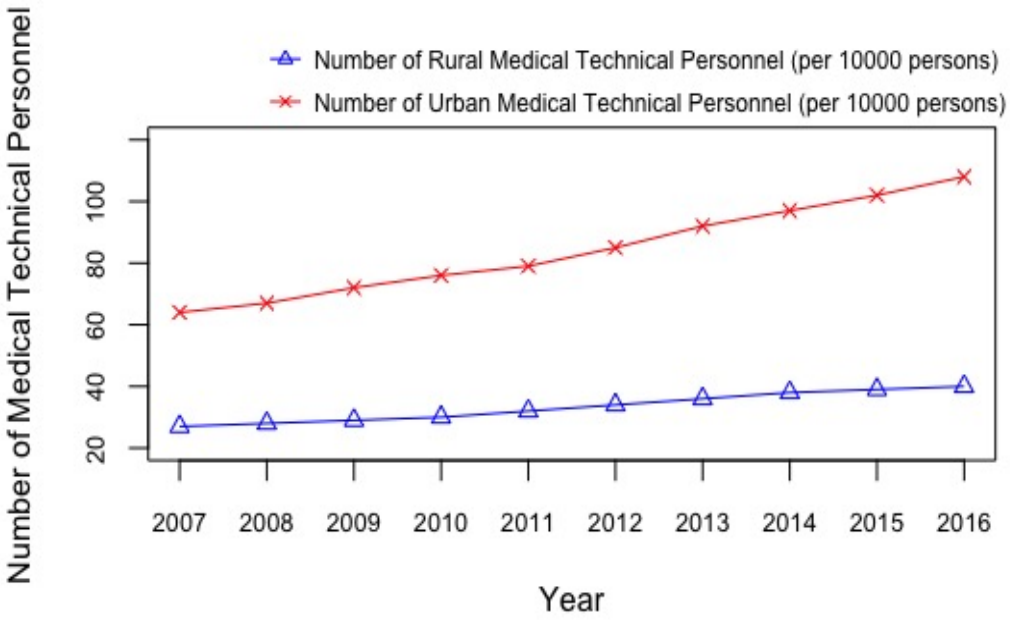
Table 1: Illiteracy rate (% of people age 15 and over)

Year	Rural	Town	Urban	Rural/Urban
1982	34.8	NA	16.4	2.1
1990	26.2	11.5	12.2	2.2
2000	11.6	6.5	4.6	2.5
2010	7.3	3.9	1.9	3.8

Data source: China 1982, 1990, 2000, 2010 population census data. The illiteracy rate for 1982 is based on people who are 12 years old and above, different from the rests that are based on people who are 15 years old and above.

Urban-rural economic inequality definitely has further resulted in a large gap between regions with regard to access to basic healthcare (Dollar, 2007). Figure 1 shows the number of medical technical personnel per 10000 persons in both urban and rural China for a ten-year period. From 2007 to 2016, there was a growing evident disparity in the number of medical technical personnel between rural and urban regions. One of the consequences of inadequate healthcare is an increasing infant mortality rate. The latest statistical results show that in 2016, the infant mortality rate in urban areas was

Figure 1: Number of medical technical personnel (per 10000 persons) in both rural and urban China



Source: Own compilation based on the recent ten years data from National Bureau of Statistic of China

4.2%, less than half of that rate in rural area, which was 9%. Likewise, over the same period, the mortality rate of children under 5 in rural areas was 12.4%, more than twice that of urban areas (5.2%).

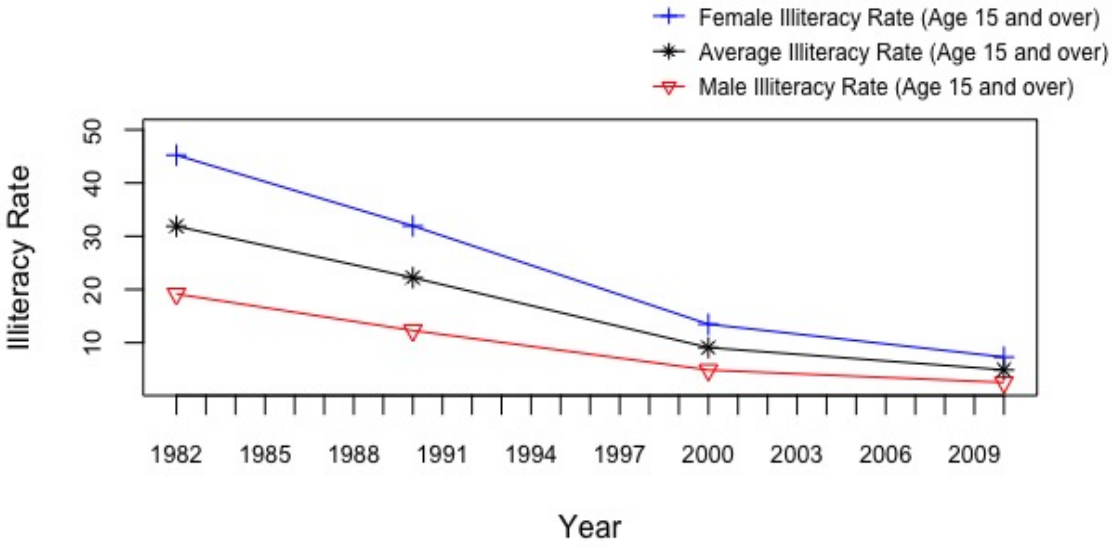
Regional Inequality Rapid growth is linked to regional disparity. Regarding the economic situation, from the period of the socialist planned economy characterized by egalitarian wages to the early 1990s, "inequality across major regions trended downward, but it rose sharply in the decade of the 1990s" (Fleisher, Li, & Zhao, 2010, p. 216). Currently, approximately 12% of China's overall income inequality is attributed to disparities across provinces (Xie & Zhou, 2014). The 2016 annual data at the provincial level released by National Bureau of Statistics of China showed that, Beijing had the highest level of gross regional production per capita (118,198 *yuan*, equal to 18,566 *US dollars*). This value was about 4.3 times that of the Gansu province, which had the lowest gross regional production per capita (27,643 *yuan*, equal to 4342 *US dollars*). As that economic inequality happens, a report presented by McKinsey consultants

shows that 87% of middle class has concentrated in Coastal China (11 in 31 provincial administrative units) in 2002. Although this value is predicted to reduce to 61% in 2022, the share of the middle class continues to differ by geography (Barton, Chen, & Jin, 2013).

Regional inequality is further characterized by unequal access to basic education and health care across provinces. China's 2010 population census reported that, the average illiteracy rate (for respondents aged 15 and over) is 4.88% by provincial region, ranging from 1.86% in Beijing to 32.29% in Tibet. Aside from Tibet, there are three other provinces whose illiteracy rate is higher than 10%: Gansu (10.62%), Guizhou (11.4%), and Qinghai (12.94%). Education development exhibits regional disparities in the same way. The dataset used by Hannum and Meiyan (2006) shows that in the first decade of establishing the market economy, compared to some costal provinces experiencing dramatic improvement in education level, the percentage of primary school graduates entering into secondary school by some provinces improved very slightly, such as that in the Guizhou province and the Gansu province. Additionally, in the same period, this percentage in Tibet dropped drastically.

Poorer health conditions have also been associated with inequality between regions. Before its economic reform, China was among the poorest countries in the world, but it ranked near middle-income countries in terms of life expectancy, due to the socialist system and the egalitarian ideology (Banister, 1987; Y. Cai, 2009). The market-based system has created this health disparity, with people living in well-developed provinces, particularly in the costal areas, gaining more in the way of social rewards from economic growth (Y. Cai, 2009, p.146). The most recent 2010 national population census calculated that the life expectancy of some coastal provincial level regions exceeded 80, including Beijing (80.18) and Shanghai (80.26). However, in some inland areas, life expectancy is predominantly below 70, such as that Tibet (68.17) and Qinghai (69.96). These distinctive variations of life expectancy within provinces are largely consistent with the inequality of public health conditions. For example, at the provincial level in 2016, the number of medical technical personnel in health care institutions per 10,000 persons ranged from 108 (Beijing) to 45 (Tibet).

Figure 2: China illiteracy rate by gender



Source: Own compilation based on the data from China 1982, 1990, 2000, 2010 population census. The illiteracy rate for 1982 is based on people who are 12 years old and above, different from the rests that are based on people who are 15 years old and above.

Gender Inequality Pursuing gender equality is one of the main goals of, and achievements under, socialism. However, the initiation of China's transition has changed the original policy agenda of the gender equality and has made hierarchical relationships between men and women constitute one of the tenets of the Chinese social stratification order (F. Wang, 2008; P. N. Cohen & Wang, 2009). Since education is often considered an advantaged sphere of social life for women, gender inequality is suggested to be more pronounced in educational systems (Jacobs, 1996). Figure 2 presents calculations of the illiteracy rate by gender from China's most recent population census. A considerable reduction in illiteracy for both men and women took place after economic reform. However, there has been a gender gap with regard to access to basic education, and the female illiteracy rate has been maintained above that average. Moreover, China's gender inequality in educational attainment is found to vary by area (rural vs. urban). Women in rural areas are faced more serious education inequality, particularly after they finish 9-year compulsory education (primary school and junior high school; Zeng, Pang, Zhang, Medina, & Rozelle, 2014).

In a market-oriented system, gender inequality significantly manifests in the form

of income inequality. Statistically, in urban China, the female disadvantage in income enlarged from 15% in early 1990s to 25% in 2000 (F. Wang, 2008; P. N. Cohen & Wang, 2009). Market transition theory ascribes this gender inequality in income to the establishment of the market economy. To be concrete, China's economic transformation has initiated the honoring of efficiency and productivity, which tends to give rise to discrimination against women whose individual traits are believed to not be correlated to productivity (Shu & Bian, 2003). Scholars have also found that after taking into account some market-related mechanisms, for instance, gender difference in educational attainment, sector of employment, industrial locations, and access to social capital, the gender gap in income increases dramatically compared to when only taking differences in individual characteristics between men and women into consideration (F. Wang, 2008; P. N. Cohen & Wang, 2009; C. Cheng, Wang, & Bian, 2015). This reveals that, with respect to gender segregation among industries in urban China (Shu, 2005), women are concentrated in the "less-privileged economic sectors, lower-ranked occupations, and lower-paying industries" (P. N. Cohen & Wang, 2009, p.51).

1.1.2 Social Structure Under Reform

China's market transition since 1978 has involved a fundamental reorganizations of social order, with an abandonment of egalitarian ideology and former socioeconomic ways of life. The description of the status-quo of inequality provides an understanding of China's social structure under economic reform. Based on the dual classification of *hukou* registration, the relationship between urban and rural China is central to the construction of urban-rural dual structure (e.g., Bian, 2002; Goodman, 2014). This phenomenon has been depicted as "one country, two societies" (Whyte, 2010c, p. 1).The citizenship inequality built on the *hukou* system not only divides life chances between urban and rural areas, but also marginalizes rural migrants in urban society (e.g., K. W. Chan & Zhang, 1999; Goodman, 2014; Afridi et al., 2015). Even though China's entire society is divided into two parts, the economic reform has resulted in both urban and rural areas starting to look like those found in capitalist societies.

Social Structure in Rural China The reconstruction of rural society occurs after economic liberation. The introduction of a liberal market and decollectivization has

given rise to a sector of non-agricultural business in rural areas, which internally stratifies the peasantry (Skinner, 1985). In a China-specific discursive context, the peasantry has always been identified as a relatively subordinate class, including peasants who live and work in rural China, rural migrant workers, and others who live and work in urban areas (Goodman, 2014). In rural society, what was a relatively homogeneous peasant stratum before economic reform is currently spilt into two classes: a rich peasant class and a poor peasant class (So, 2003). Agricultural marketing and off-farm businesses differentiate the characteristics of rich peasants from peasants who keep themselves working on farms (De Janvry, Sadoulet, & Zhu, 2005), making the boundary between the high-income group and the low-income group increasingly distinct.

In addition to wealth indicators, some scholars have examined the monopolization of resources in rural China with respect to social structure, and have found consistency with Max Weber's observations of social stratification by degree of political power, or social status. Walder (2002) pointed out that the market system has transformed China's rural society from one based on a political structure alone to one based on a political-economic structure. In his study, it was concluded that income inequality is reinforced by unequal power and privileges. Based on household income, China's rural society can be divided into the following strata: cadre entrepreneur household, cadre household, entrepreneur household, and ordinary household.

In rural China, village cadres are advantaged group members of their rural communities, which signify authority of allocating resources and prioritizing tasks, and privilege of accessing greater rates of socioeconomic returns. Walder's interpretation of inequality in rural China emphasizes monopolization by cadres (Walder, 2002). Marketization, as a sort of structural change, partly expands political advantages in the reconstruction of rural society. An entrepreneur with a cadre position will be well-compensated in the more industrialized rural areas (Parish, Zhe, & Li, 1995; Walder, 2002). As a result, socioeconomic returns for working as a village cadre inevitably increase over time (J. Zhang, Giles, & Rozelle, 2012). Another interpretation of the social structure in rural China justifies the monopolization of resources, specifically, by cadres intertwined with privileged insiders. From this perspective, rural society can be categorized into two groups: (privileged) insiders and (inferior) outsiders (Unger,

2012). This classification can mainly be found in the rural areas with a well-developed, non-agricultural business sector, particularly in some coastal villages. The increasing number of migrants from nearby counties and faraway provinces generates an identity-based rural society. In this case, natives who are represented by village cadres emphasize themselves as privileged insiders, to be distinguished from the socially and economically inferior migrants.

Not restricted by any specific theory, Bian (2002) synthesized some published findings by native Chinese sociologists, that followed eight social classes that might be found in rural society: "(a) rural cadres as political elites; (b) private entrepreneurs as the new capitalist class; (c) managers of township and village enterprises; (d) household and individual business owners as the petty bourgeoisie; (e) professionals as the new rural middle class; (f) peasant laborers (including rural migrant workers in urban areas); (g) wage labor in local private sector as the new working class; (h) agricultural peasants" (Bian, 2002, p.95). Owing to the mixture of theories of ownership, based on political authority and cultural capital, this classification is believed to provide a comprehensive sketch of China's rural class structure under reform.

Social Structure in Urban China The class structure in urban China is more complex, due to not only the diversity of industrial sectors that has developed since economic reform, but also because of the flexible household registration policy that encourages rural peasants to interact with the urban industrial system and the market. One of the more prominent changes in urban society has happened to the lower class. Roughly, in urban China, employees of commercial service, the industrial working class, and the unemployed and semi-employed are classified into the lower stratum by workforce (J. Hu, Li, & Wei, 2012). Hu and his colleagues used the data released by Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to further point out that, the proportion of the lowest level of the entire society has been expanding since 2000. In terms of urban society, this phenomenon reflects the expansion of the jobless, unemployed, and underemployed class. Practically, industrial structure upgrades, excessively speedy urbanization, and lack of competitiveness are believed to contribute to the increasing lowest class population (J. Hu et al., 2012).

Trends related to the emerging and the accelerated rise of middle class have made

their appearance in China's urban society. Exclusively focusing on annual disposal income per urban household, the share of urban middle class households is expected to reach 76% in 2022 (Barton et al., 2013). Academically, however, the middle class in China is usually more an occupational than an economic construct, as an advanced profession (i.e. a white-collar job) is a guarantee of a relatively high and stable socioeconomic status (Tomba, 2004; C. Li, 2010; J. Hu et al., 2012). This definition also restricts the discursive context of China's middle class in urban areas. The accelerated rise of the new urban middle class has been greatly attributed to the expansion of higher education institutions and the service sector, both of which characterize such a class group as not only capitalist, but also intellectual segment (So, 2003). Scholars summarized the following very typical middle class occupations in urban China: managers, clerks, and professional and technical personnel. In addition, considering the possession of certain amounts of capital, some private entrepreneurs and individual business owners are classified into the middle class (J. Hu et al., 2012).

Owing to socioeconomic advantages, middle-class people are more likely to have access to some advanced resources and to share a common social identity (Tomba, 2004). In this interpretation, the middle class in urban China is defined by a lifestyle, including particular consumption behavior, that entails such luxuries as studying abroad and so on (e.g., Liechty, 2003; Tomba, 2004; Zhan & He, 2012). Research by McKinsey has shown that, in urban China, the consumption habits of younger generation middle-class people are more westernized than the older generation. At the same time, the population characterized by middle-class consumption behaviors is predicted to drastically increase by 2022 (Barton et al., 2013).

The distribution of middle-class population reveals some structural inequalities in China. Geographically, although there is an expansion of the middle class population in the west and the north, the majority of the middle class population continues to concentrate in China's coastal provinces. Judged by annual disposable income levels, only less than 20% of the middle-class population was dispersed in selected tier 3 and tier 4 cities[4] by 2002. Even though this rate is expected to grow to 40%, the

[4]The Chinese city tier system is a hierarchical classification of Chinese cities and frequently referred to by non-official publications. Cities in different tiers reflect distinctions in income level, population size, business opportunity, internationalization and diversity, infrastructure, future dynamism, and so

limited number of tier 1 and tier 2 cities[5] will still have attracted more than half of China's middle-class population (Barton et al., 2013). What's more, a gendered division of labor exists in the urban labor market. Even if the education level of women in urban China increases significantly, occupationally, the belief that women are physically weaker, less capable than men, and mainly responsible for the domestic domain makes it harder for women to obtain white-collar jobs and to enter the middle class (J. Liu, 2013).

Overall, social stratification in both urban and rural areas has intensified, which denotes that the gap between social classes has increasingly widened (J. Hu et al., 2012). In rural society, although the diversity of emerging social classes reflects the propensity of the market system, underclass agricultural peasants and peasant laborers are still in greater quantity (see: Bian, 2002). Similarly, in urban China, socioeconomic resources are increasingly concentrated among the elites and middle class people (Dittmer & Lv, 1996; J. Hu et al., 2012), which has even given rise to inequality of discourse (Johnston, 2004; Sun, 2013). This is to say, the voices of advantaged social classes are more likely to be heard by the top, with the growing influence of intellectuals and capitalists on policy-making. These inequalities conversely reinforce the differences of life chances among social classes and definitely impede social mobility.

1.1.3 The Legitimacy of China's Inequality

What are Chinese citizens' attitudes toward the status-quo of inequality? This question concerns the legitimacy of inequality in a meritocratic society. Up to the present, the legitimacy of inequality in China has been directly or indirectly regarded as a premise in some social sciences academic works (e.g., Xie et al., 2012; Sun, 2013; G. King, Pan, & Roberts, 2013). Two particular questions greatly help us to understand the legitimacy of inequality under China's reform: Do most Chinese citizens approve of the now market-oriented and highly competitive society? More importantly, do disadvantaged citizens accept their worse off situations?

on. In 2013 McKinsey report, the selected tier 3 cities include: Leshan, Ziyang, and Yongzhou; the selected tier 4 cities include: Gongzhuling, Linfen, Liuan, Zhaotong, and Meishan.

[5]In 2013 McKinsey report, the tier 1 cities include: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen; the selected tier 2 cities include: Wuhan, Chengdu, Chongqing, and Foshan.

Adaptation to a market-based society is supposed to be a big challenge for citizens in transition countries. In general, for most transition countries, gaining the acceptance of the people with regard to the market system is the first step to preventing local grievances and social protests from escalating into general challenges to the existing system. Fortunately, nostalgia for the bygone state socialist era has not prevailed in China, even though some individuals and groups have experienced unemployment, downward mobility, and a highly competitive social atmosphere (C. Han & Whyte, 2009; Whyte, 2010b). On the one hand, the acceptance of the market system stems from the great number of benefits brought about by economic reform. It is the improvement in economic performance that has influenced the opinions of Chinese citizens regarding the relationship between development and inequality. On the other hand, for most ordinary people, inequality is the inevitable cost of a country's progress (Xie et al., 2012). Although China's current leaders have responded to fears that rising inequality might threaten political and social stability by announcing some changes in policy, such as the abolition of rural taxes and fees to construct harmonious society, the general consent surrounding the economic transformation technically ensures the feasibility and stability of the market system and Chinese Communist Party rule (C. Han & Whyte, 2009).

Inequality is equated to injustice that is against free will (Rakowski, 1991). Since Deng Xiaoping encouraged some people to get rich first, China has initiated its switch in distribution principle from egalitarianism to efficiency (So, 2003). Effective distribution is a sort of stimulation for people to try to get rich themselves, which denotes a growing division between advantaged groups and disadvantaged groups. Feelings of injustice and resentment are likely to motivate Chinese citizens to doubt and disobey authority, which may threaten social and political stability (Whyte, 2010b). How low socioeconomic status people view current inequality, therefore, is central to understanding the degree to which inequality in China has been legitimized.

C. Han and Whyte (2009) have found that people of lower social status vary in their views on distributive issues. The strongest feelings of injustice appear to be held by rural migrant workers in urban areas and by workers in the urban private sector. Rural people, who are objectively at or near the bottom of the social hierarchy, however, feel

optimistic about chances for ordinary people to move ahead. Survey data demonstrated that by 2005, 74.8% of the respondents felt that the children of peasants and workers have equal chances in Chinese society, and about 80% believed that opportunities are equal if people are smart enough (X. Wu, 2009). These results, at least to some extent, demonstrate that the inequality has been legitimized by merit.

At the same time, disadvantaged groups, rural citizens, females, and people with fewer socioeconomic resources in China have been found to have a higher desire for unequal and dominant/subordinate relations among social groups and classes (Im, 2014). Psychologically, Im (2014) characterized these disadvantaged groups as generally holding a social dominance orientation (SDO). As a psychological disposition, SDO interprets the legitimacy of inequality from both meritocratic view and sociocultural perspective. SDO, on one hand, is based on the insight of seeing the world as a competitive jungle (Sidanius, Levin, Liu, & Pratto, 2000; Duckitt & Sibley, 2009), on the other hand, is used to measure an individual's preference for maintaining group-based discrimination (e.g., Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Accordingly, sociocultural traditions are combined with meritocracy in legitimizing superior-inferior structural relations by constructing injurious meanings (Pratto et al., 1994). The sociocultural view particularly concerns the role of stereotypes in legitimizing inequality, as stereotypes activated by sociocultural pressures can influence the competition performance of the stereotyped groups (Pratto et al., 1994; Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). In this sense, the status-quo of inequality is accepted by Chinese citizens because the outcomes of meritocratic competition reflect the sociocultural contexts. Exploring along with this way, future studies will deepen our understanding of the legitimacy of inequality by approaching to the interaction of a sociocultural schema with meritocracy.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 Research Questions

Most research agrees that since the reform and opening up, inequality in China has been not only characterized by meritocracy but also legitimized. Why is a stratified society that has undergone a recent transformation from egalitarianism to efficiency legitimized, however, has not been studied. This study tries to fill this research gap

through combining a sociocultural perspective with meritocracy. To be concrete, in a capitalist society, people feel that a merit-based social structure is just because their awareness of what is natural and what is fair has been affected by sociocultural traditions. Accordingly, the social stratification under China's market reform is presumed to be the outcome of meritocratic competition but reflects a long-lasting order of domination. I therefore particularly propose the persistent state-socialist class system to be one of the sociocultural traditions after economic reform, and examine whether or not the social stratification in today's China is perceived similarly to the socialist hierarchies. Two specific questions are thus raised:

Question1: *Whether and to what extent is social stratification in today's China reproduced from the class system held over from state-socialism?*

Question2: *If it is, what makes it happen?*

1.2.2 Research Hypotheses

Increasingly oriented by the market force, inequality in China has been transformed from a non-antagonistic class relationship to an antagonistic strata (e.g., Parkin, 1972; Nee, 1996; T. Lin & Wu, 2010). I therefore apply Max Weber's theory of stratification in observing the inequality that is the outcome of meritocratic competition. Weber maps his theory of social stratification "in relation to the orders of economic and the political" (Gane, 2005, p. 211), which have been widely applied to the study of inequality in market-oriented situations. According to Weber, an individual's class situation is determined by his/her relation to the market, and is particularly determined by their economic situations, social status and access to power (Weber, 1946). Weber emphasized that, in addition to the possession of material capital, the ability to exert influence on others also determines the strata into which a person becomes categorized. Weber's three-component theory of social stratification emphasizes that inequality results from differences in achievement, which provides a theoretical foundation to interpret the configuration of the inequality under China's reform.

Human attitudes toward certain social arrangements are socioculturally rooted in their perceptual experiences. This means that an acceptable merit-based social struc-

ture is, to some extent, in accordance with the human experience of perceiving the world. Under the one-party leadership of the socialist politburo, some earlier hierarchical arrangements during the state-socialist period have been maintained since the initiation of China's transformation. With respect to the fact of legitimate inequality, I therefore argue that even for the rise of emerging classes, the persistent socialist hierarchical system plays an important role in informing the social structure under China's reform.

Hypothesis1: *In today's China, the configuration of social stratification is, to some extent, reproduced from the class system under state socialism.*

In this study, an entire human practice system in a structural relation is defined as *socioculture*. The sociocultural approach therefore allows us to understand inequality by observing why a human tends to act in a certain way. In particular, socioeconomically distinguishing itself from others, an individual's class situation is also determined by the possession of symbolic capital and habitus. As an instrument of cognition and communication within a certain sociocultural framework, symbolic capital orients humans to follow routinized behavioral and thought patterns, which signify the access to valued traits in a society. The sociocultural perspective thus describes social inequality as a form of unequal distribution that is structurally rooted in human embodied dispositions. These embodied patterns of actions are called *habitus*. The habitus theory systematically developed by Pierre Bourdieu is adopted as a theoretical mechanism to trace how inequality is reproduced. According to Bourdieu (1977, 1990), habitus refers to the practice that is organized in accordance with the human logic acquired and structured from experiences. Without conscious intention, habitus organizes the logic of human practices seeking the conditions from which the habitus emerged, which signify access to economic capital, social status, and power in a stratified society. With regard to a society that is transforming into the meritocratic regime, such as China, habitus signifies individual merit that is relevant to competition for the scarcity of resources.

Hypothesis2: *The inequality in today's China is contributed to by the unequal distribution of habitus that has been sustained by the state-socialist hierarchical system,*

because the logic of practice organized by habitus indicates that the human ability to possess and excise power reproduces the class situation from which the habitus emerged.

1.2.3 Empirical Methods

Mixed methods research that combines quantitative and qualitative are applied in answering the research questions raised in this dissertation. It is appropriate to use mixed methods to investigate the topics of interest, because these specific research questions are identified as two questions of different dimensions. In general, "quantitative research specifies numerical assignment to the phenomenon under study, whereas qualitative research produces narrative or textual description of the phenomenon under study" (VanderStoep & Johnson, 2008, p. 7). In particular, findings from quantitative research are phenomena described numerically, and manifest in the form of a closed ended relationship among variables. Qualitative design, in contrast, is applied through open-ended questions that mainly focus on a single concept underlying the major themes of the project. These questions are raised in the forms of "what" and "how" (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007; VanderStoep & Johnson, 2008).

In recent years, quantitative and qualitative research methods have ceased to be viewed as dichotomous research paradigms, but rather as dimensionally different (R. B. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; VanderStoep & Johnson, 2008). How research questions are arranged under certain conditions determines the form in which quantitative and qualitative approaches can coexist. In consideration of the arrangement of data types in a particular order, three major research paradigms of mixed methods can be summarized: the quantitative dominant, the qualitative dominant, and the equal status (R. B. Johnson et al., 2007; Creswell, 2007). With regard to the former two methods, quantitative and qualitative data are collected in phases to answer sequentially connected questions. With regard to the latter, data is collected concurrently, as research questions are independent of each other.

In this dissertation, I use quantitative and qualitative investigations sequentially to understand the phenomena of interest. The two research questions raised above are

connected in phases, which means that findings from the first quantitative question inform the qualitative exploration. To be concrete, understanding the quantitative results that reveal the configuration of inequality in today's China constitutes the initial intention of this study, and directly determines how the qualitative data is gathered for answering the second research question.

Quantitative Method Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) is applied as a statistical technique in representing the underlying structure of inequality in today's China. Essentially, this research question addresses a quantitative relationship between the state-socialist class system and social stratification in the market-oriented situation. MCA, thus, is an appropriate technique to analyze the patterns of relationship between several categorical variables (e.g., Abdi & Valentin, 2007), and to examine whether or not the social stratification is reproduced from the hierarchical system under state socialism.

The raw data from the 2015 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS) is employed in the quantitative research[6]. Launched in 2003, the CGSS has become an authoritative dataset that is widely used in tracking the dynamics of social structure and life quality in China (see: Bian & Li, 2012). A series of survey items relevant to the state-socialist hierarchical system (such as items related to one's economic situation, social status, power, demographic items, and other supplementary items) are selected and converted to the categorical variables for the quantitative investigation. The survey data collected has been organized as categorical, or nominal, since the MCA is applicable to a large set of categorical data. Due to the urban-rural dualism, the underlying structure of urban and rural societies is observed.

Qualitative Method As the second phase of mixed methods, the qualitative research approach was developed based upon the findings from the quantitative research. In particular, within the hypothetical view that inequality in today's China is to some extent a reproduction of the state-socialist class system, the qualitative research is targeted at the factors that contribute to the inequality reproduction in China.

This qualitative research was conducted in the form of in-depth, face-to-face inter-

[6]Published in 2018.01.01, the 2015 CGSS data is the latest public data.

views in urban and rural societies. The participants were strictly selected as the individual representatives of each social class. Through a series of qualitative interviews, human habitus and how it works in determining an individual's position in a social structure, were observed. The qualitative research consists of two things: constructing human habitus types and bridging the habitus types to human class situations. The documentary method (see: Bohnsack, 2014) was adopted to interpret the qualitative data collected from the interviews.

One contribution of this qualitative research is developing a method of operationalizing the concept of habitus, which has been ignored by Bourdieu. In line with Jodhka, Rehbein, and Souza (2017), the everyday practice summarized from semi-structured interview data determines "elementary categories" that characterize habitus and further construct ideal-types. The categories of habitus traits are inductively developed through observing the practical actions and utterances of interviewees. These traits then are assembled into the habitus types ideally situated in the context of China's transformation. Through the construction of habitus types, the aim is to examine how a transforming society is stratified under the influence of the socialist socioculture.

1.3 Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 and chapter 3 present the theoretical foundation of this study. Chapter 2 comprehensively introduces the concept of legitimacy, which justifies the application of the sociocultural perspective in exploring why a stratified society resulted from meritocratic competition is accepted by most ordinary people. Chapter 3 focuses on inequality within a sociocultural framework. This framework generally explains the ontological process of a social class, and why each class or group justifies their position in the hierarchical system. Thus, an entire sign-system is viewed as the structural root of inequality. In this chapter, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital and habitus are introduced to explain: (1) How human practice or habitus is symbolically mediated; (2) How inequality is reproduced by human habitus; and (3) How the reproduction of inequality is legitimized.

Chapter 4 systematically describes the historical background of China's class system under state socialism (1957-1978) and how this system evolved after the reform and

opening-up. As a system of non-antagonistic strata, the state-socialist hierarchical arrangements are presumed to shape human thinking and behavior and can therefore be called a socialist socioculture. Even though the market system has been developing for 40 years in China under the socialist political system, the state-socialist hierarchical system is expected to always mediate human practice in a transforming society.

Chapter 5 and chapter 6 focus on empirical analysis. In chapter 5, multiple correspondence analysis is developed to quantitatively detect whether or not, and (if the former) to what extent, inequality in today's China corresponds to the state-socialist class system. Findings from this quantitative research inform the data collection of the qualitative interviews. In chapter 6, the documentary method is used to interpret the qualitative data. Habitus types in urban and rural China are then constructed based on a hypothetical sociocultural mechanism and demonstrated empirically. Finally, the use of the documentary method allows us to observe how habitus types contribute to inequality and its reproduction.

2 Understanding Legitimate Inequalities in Meritocratic Societies: A Sociocultural Perspective

Transforming from an egalitarian ideology to one focused on efficiency (So, 2003), inequality becomes a result of meritocratic competition between individuals (Jodhka et al., 2017). Therefore, the legitimacy of inequality under China's reform deserves more attention. But what is *legitimacy of inequality*? If inequality in today's China is being legitimated, how can we understand this legitimacy effectively? These questions are crucial to begin at an approach to my primary argument in this study. Referring to the legitimacy of inequality under reform implies a premise that the current system of social stratification has been accepted by most Chinese citizens without deliberation, particularly by the citizens who are of lower status. This voluntary collective acceptance, I argue, is a perceptual process constructed by the socioculture within a state-socialist context. From this perspective, the inheritance and reproduction of the earlier state-socialist class system naturalizes and justifies the inequality under reform, which in turn makes people feel that the social stratification based on merit is at least partially proper and just.

This chapter first provides a brief introduction to the political philosophical term *legitimacy*, and of how this concept is applied to inequality research. The sociocultural approach is then introduced to help one to understand how inequality can be legitimized in a meritocratic society. The sociocultural approach suggests that social practices that are passed on from one period to the next reproduce and naturalize inequality by merit. Consequently, people tend to feel that social inequalities are just and acceptable.

2.1 Legitimacy of Inequality

2.1.1 Legitimacy: Basic Ideas

The term *legitimacy* originates from political philosophy, and now has been extended to several social science subjects. In modern politics, legitimacy plays a role of moral

tool, to justify governmental power. The prevailing interpretation of legitimacy is that government must rest on the consent of the governed "in the name of people" (Näsström, 2007, p. 624). Consent theory was initially applied to explain legitimacy by one of the founders of political philosophy, Tomas Hobbes. The relevant ideas can be found in his best known work *Leviathan*. Although he is often viewed as an absolutism defender, Hobbes also developed some liberal thoughts, evidenced through statements such as "for all men are equally and by nature free" (Hobbes, 2002, p.162). The natural condition of mankind, for Hobbes, is one of a war of "every one against every one" (Hobbes, 2002, p. 80), which compels men to realize that the essences of self-interest are peace and stability, and order is preferable to chaos (Dyzenhaus, 2001). Given that, it is necessary to establish general rules to forbid men to engage in the destructive actions. These rules are called "natural law" (Hobbes, 2002, p. 164). Because of the equality and the natural freedom of all men, however, there is no natural authority among them, the authority has to be authorized to make law and to represent men's will and interests (Riley, 1973). Hobbes believed that the basis of the founding of a sovereign authority is a social contract.

Another well known Englightenment-era British political philosopher was John Locke. Locke continued to relate the concept of legitimacy to consent. In his work *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke wrote that "he has no Right, to get me into his Power ... I have no reason to suppose, that he, who would *take away my Liberty*, would not when he had me in his Power, take away everything else" (Locke, 1988, p.280). Locke's ideas on legitimacy argue against political absolutism, and emphasize the enforcement of public rules (J. Cohen, 1986). But why is common consent so crucial to legitimize government or political society? Lockean theory goes beyond Hobbesian, by associating the assumption that human beings are in a state of nature and equally free, with property and territory rights. Locke noted that the settlement of property rights suggests agreement on boundaries between men and their neighbors (Locke, 1988). The emphasis on property rights obliges men not to harm anyone else's in life, liberty, or possessions, and thus natural law creates obligations for everyone (Locke, 1988). Agreement on these obligations therefore constitutes the necessary or minimum condition for a legitimate civil society (J. Cohen, 1986).

Continuing this tradition, Jean-Jacques Rousseau further developed the essence of legitimacy in civil society. His most quoted line, from the beginning of the first book of *The Social Contract, 1762*, is: "man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains" (Rousseau, 2013, p. 35). In the book I of *The Social Contract, 1762*, Rousseau concentrated on how to reconcile individual freedom with political authority (Bertram, 2004). He distinguished civil liberty from natural liberty, and pointed out that natural liberty is limited by the power of the individual while the civil liberty is limited by the general will (Rousseau, 2013). Through social contracts, men gain civil liberty but lose unlimited rights. Civil society, thus, in both Locke's and Rousseau's eyes, is an alternative entity that is consistent with men's desire for self-preservation of property and other interests, and also denotes men's departure from the state of nature (Kumar, 1993; Bertram, 2004). Based on this idea, Rousseau rejected the role of nature and force in maintaining social order, and believed that the universal will or agreement is the only possible source of legitimacy. Politically, a legitimate administrative system comes into being when the general will is applied or enforced (Bertram, 2004).

Beyond philosophy, Max Weber applied legitimacy to the study of political and social systems. According to Weber, "state is a relation of men dominating men"(Weber, 1946, p. 78). Weber's theory on legitimacy answers an important question, that is: When and why do men voluntarily obey a certain leader's orders (Weber, 1946; Pakulski, 1986)? Naturally, this collective voluntary obedience or acceptance is an expression of consent. According to Weber, men's obedience, is determined by fear of the revenge of power-holders, and hope for rewards. There are three domains to which humans can be said to submit their obedience in a social context, provided they view each as legitimate: the "traditional," the "charismatic," and the "legal" (Weber, 1946, p. 79). These three inner justifications refer to the sanctification of the authority, the authority of the extraordinary and personal gift of grace, and authority's belief in the validity of legal statute, respectively (Weber, 1946). It shows that the natural implication of legitimacy is the defense of appropriation. Weber then specified the use of *convention* to deepen the application of legitimacy. In social life, Weber believed, a legitimate order is organized through a series of behaviors that are consistent with society's normative patterns (Weber, 1978).

2.1.2 Legitimacy and Inequality

Weber's interpretation of legitimacy has given rise to a number of perspectives in social sciences. From classical to contemporary theories, legitimacy has received increased attention by sociologists, and has provided grounds for research across many sociological areas, such as social organization, social order, and mobilization studies (e.g., Stryker, 1994; Sauder, Lynn, & Podolny, 2012). In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, legitimacy is described as a state of appropriateness that is granted to an entity. A legitimate entity is one that is suited to the institutionalized values, norms and beliefs of a social environment to which the entity belongs to. Only in this way can an entity deserve collective support in the environment (Troyer, 2007). Here emphasis on collective support in generating legitimacy is comparative to the emphasis on consent in earlier political philosophical works.

Based on Weber's theory of legitimacy, H. A. Walker (2014) summarized two broad streams of modern legitimacy research in the social sciences. The first focuses on the emergence and validation of rules that govern social forms and actions. The second concerns individuals' evaluation of social structure and system. The former examines the processes through which organizations operate validly at the macro-level, while the latter concentrates on individuals' attitudes towards social structure and processes at the micro-level (see also: Weatherford, 1992; H. A. Walker, 2014). Notwithstanding that social theories involving legitimacy have drawn heavily on consent theory from political philosophy, sociologists seem more interested in the legitimacy of the formation of structural relations. Influenced by Lèvi-Straus's theory that structure refers to the universal laws and rules that organize binary oppositions in mythical thoughts (Lévi-Strauss, 1974), the contemporary structuralist direction underlines the causal force of the relations among elements in a system (M. A. Schneider, 2007). Structuralism or structural relations theory is generally built on sign-systems, and intends to reflect an abstract picture that expresses the reality (Pettit, 1977; M. A. Schneider, 2007). In the domain of sociology, gender relations (male vs. female) and racial relations (black vs. white) are very typical examples of structural relations described by abstract semiotic theory. In this sense, the structural relation is a socially constructed metaphor for hierarchy (Sewell Jr, 1992). And whether these organizational forms have gained

legitimacy depends on whether or not people voluntarily accept their positions and the values, norms, and beliefs that have been transmitted through these relations (B. S. Turner, 2006; Troyer, 2007).

Structural relations generate dominance and inequality. Drawing an associative link between legitimacy and inequality requires the condition that such dominance has been collectively acknowledged as valid (H. A. Walker, 2014). In an unequal structural relation, different actors are assigned to different social roles to create social groups or classes. People act through semiotic social roles, and finally create an abstractly presented social structure (B. S. Turner, 2006). As an abstract social order, legitimate structural inequality deals not only with whether a person with a positional advantage tend to support a stratified system, but also whether a disadvantaged one will likewise tends to support it (Stolte, 1983). The need of legitimate structural relations is an "inequality regime" that produces a series of relevant corresponding internalized rules and norms, so that legitimacy is believed to play an important role in creating and maintaining social relations (Acker, 2006). Upon this, the legitimacy of inequality is strengthened through the process of naturalizing inequality (Acker, 2006; Jodhka et al., 2017). Taking gender inequality as an example, gender discrimination policies in social spaces are historically made. Currently, even if women have already been aware of gender disparities in society, many of them still take male-female differences for granted as part of the way how their work and life are organized.

To sum up, legitimacy in inequality research investigates how a hierarchical arrangement regime at the macro-level transforms into a collectively acceptable norm at the micro-level. A legitimated relation of inequality and the promotion, maintenance, and reproduction of social arrangements are mutually constructed. As a perception of justification rather than an objective fact, legitimacy implies an awareness of what is fair, what is natural, and what could be tolerated. It is internalized attitudes and behaviors that make legitimacy into a mechanism that maintains and reproduces inequality. Naturalizing inequality is a psychological process for establishing obligations for group members to tolerate and to conform to the rules that govern the inequality regime (Blanchar & Eidelman, 2013; H. A. Walker, 2014). With regard to human perception, in turn, inequality in a meritocratic society appears natural and acceptable

when it is expressed in a form of being reproduced or reflects a long-lasting order of domination (Blanchar & Eidelman, 2013). Next, I will apply a socio-psychological perspective to the interpretation of legitimacy and legitimation respectively, to justify the application of the sociocultural perspective to the understanding of human perception of authorities, institutions, and social arrangements.

2.1.3 Legitimacy and Legitimation: A Socio-psychological Approach

The philosophical interpretation of legitimacy reveals that basic ideas of this concept denote a human belief in the appropriation and justification of authorities and institutional arrangements. In the modern social sciences, an increasing number of social psychologists have incorporated the dimension of political philosophy into their theorizing about legitimacy, and have interpreted legitimacy as a psychological property of humans in which they feel they ought to defer to certain rules and decisions (e.g., Tyler, 1997, 2006a; Costa-Lopes, Dovidio, Pereira, & Jost, 2013). In other words, legitimacy emphasizes how people feel and think about certain rules and norms. Human appraisal of legitimacy, therefore, is a mental action or process of accepting norms or not. Human judgment with regard to legitimacy has its foundations in a perceptual process. Major (1994) argues that, in social systems, legitimacy may arise within public consciousness through one of three modes: distributive justice norms, procedural justice norms, and attributions of responsibility. In this sense, the logic of how authorities, institutional arrangements, or social systems are perceived as legitimate develops out from the way human perceptions are organized, "in concert with a simple justification ideology that guides social conduct" (Crandall & Beasley, 2001, p.78).

If legitimacy is understood as a particular psychological property in making judgment, it must be also viewed as a broad social process. Human feelings of ought to defer to rules are evoked by internalized values (Tyler, 2006a). Legitimacy, thus, becomes a generalized perception that is socially constructed within a taken-for-granted system of values, norms, and rules (Suchman, 1995; C. Johnson, Dowd, & Ridgeway, 2006), and has to be appraised within a local situation, or a broader community such as an organization or a society. Otherwise, it would not make sense. In particular, the way humans perceptually make judgments on appropriateness and justify a given social

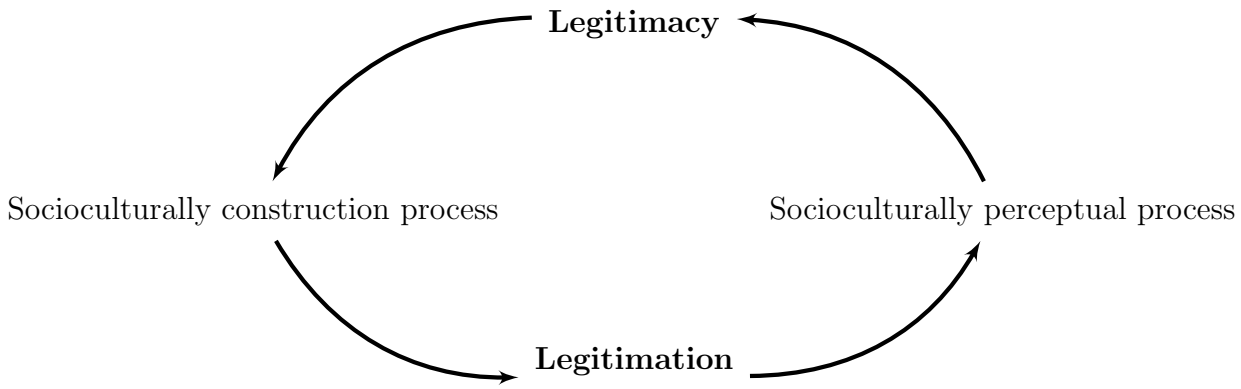


Figure 3: A social organization that is maintained by legitimation and legitimacy.

reality denotes their awareness of surroundings. This awareness, or mental process, is acquired through social and/or cultural interactions and is situated in particular contexts (C. A. Sanderson, 2010). For instance, Im (2014), while examining Chinese society, stressed in his article that citizens attitudes toward legitimacy of inequality are constructed upon a psychological mechanism that is embedded in China-specific political-cultural schemata that is shaped by historical contingencies and momentous social events.

Legitimation, refers to the processes by which authorities, institutions, and social arrangements are justified as meeting norms, rules, and standards (Costa-Lopes et al., 2013). Legitimation thus can be described as a characteristic of being legitimized within a framework through which something is believed just and proper (Tyler, 2006a). More specifically, human beliefs that institutional and social arrangements are appropriate and just help make sense of sociopolitical systems in ways that provide support for the rationality and justice of excising power by an authority. In this sense, legitimation is a process of social construction and becomes one of the pillars of stability maintenance in a social organization. Searching for a recognizably appropriate form of identity is crucial in legitimation construction, as identity signifies a collective reconciliation of conflicting needs for assimilation and differentiation (Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006). The fact is that humans are more willing to comply with a justifiably recognized subject, even though they have to concede what they should have been granted to a certain extent (see also: Costa-Lopes et al., 2013).

In terms of social inequality, legitimacy and legitimation concern different aspects of the same process. Legitimacy of inequality emphasizes human belief that the class systems or hierarchical arrangements are proper, just and acceptable. Taking social reality as an object of judgment, legitimacy is gained through human subjective feeling. Legitimation reveals a characteristic of inequality that the certain class system or hierarchical arrangement appears to be just and proper and thus perceptually accepted by humans. Legitimacy and legitimation, therefore, are reciprocally constructed (see: Figure 3). The research target of the present study is to find out why Chinese citizens voluntarily accept the status quo of inequality. This exploration of the cause of legitimacy of inequality has to be associated with the meritocratic characteristic of inequality becoming legitimized.

2.2 Cause of Legitimacy of Inequality: A Sociocultural Framework

How do hierarchical arrangements become collectively accepted in a meritocratic society? What makes the inequality appears to be naturalized and justified? Why do lower status people voluntarily accept their inferiority? These questions are keys to understanding the source of the legitimacy of inequality in today's China. Legitimate inequality is about domination that describes a naturalized superiority-inferiority structural relation. The description of the legitimacy of China's inequality in the introductory chapter addresses a question of social dominance and how the structural relation from micro level to macro level is naturalized and accepted by citizens. The fact has been emphasized above that human perceptions of justification are socioculturally organized, which further justifies the application of the sociocultural perspective in exploring the source of the legitimacy of inequality.

2.2.1 Social Domination: From Individual to Social Group

In terms of structural relations, the nature of inequality is group-based discrimination and oppression that promotes the superiority of one social group over others (Sidanius, Pratto, Martin, & Stallworth, 1991; Pratto et al., 1994). In academic work, racism and gender dominance are very typical cases for discussing group-based inequality. In the

relevant studies, symbolic recognitions, such as "female" and "Black" become the categorical sources of social classification. For this reason, I will now introduce the psychological trait "social dominance orientation" (SDO) (Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003, p. 161) to describe how human perception is organized in viewing inequality. As a micro-level psychological and behavioral disposition, social dominance orientation expresses an individual's more general desire for unequal social systems. For instance, individuals who have a high SDO are found to be more nationalistic, anti-Black racist and sexist (Pratto et al., 1994). To be concrete, despite being in lower status positions, individuals who are high in SDO still believe that hierarchy is appropriate, and voluntarily accept their inferiority. For individuals, the acceptance of domination denotes that something appears to be naturalized and routinized (Brighenti, 2011). Thus, social inequality can be understood as a perceptual construction of reality.

As a psychological mechanism, the disposition of social dominance orientation reproduces and reinforces inequality via "individuals who have a general preference for hierarchical structures over egalitarian ones" (Schmitt et al., 2003, p.162). This psychological trait has an organized set of values and beliefs that view hierarchical structure as proper and further justifies the corresponding practices. In particular, human practice is socially constructed by this perceptual process within a cultural context. Furthermore, this mechanism corresponds to the group conflict model, so that the individual psychological level can become associated with a sociopolitical structure (Blumer, 1958; Pratto et al., 2000). The maintenance of group-based dominance relies on two conditions: institutionalized discrimination within a symbolic world, and relevant normative social practices (see also: Pratto et al., 2000).

Theoretically, institutionalized discrimination refers to the rules, norms, and policies that contribute to maintaining disadvantaged groups (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). This definition reveals the fact that it is a rule in discriminatory practice that leads the group-based dominance or inequality to be structured and reproduced. The institutionalized discriminatory attitudes and behaviors at group-level emerge from a system of symbolic interaction, and contribute to symbolic inequality between the classes (Jodhka et al., 2017). An individual becomes humanized through interaction with others. This interaction thus gives rise to the acquisition of human nature, thinking,

and self-direction (Manis & Meltzer, 1978). Within a symbolic world, the interaction is the process of the formation of routinized values, norms and rules. For instance, physical differences among individuals can be interpreted as gender differences within the gender system, or as ethnic differences within the ethnic system. It is the symbolic recognition, such as gender, ethnicity, and title, that transforms the domination from individual-level to group-level. Another example, from the labor market, is that women and minorities have to become better educated and experienced to compete with men and majorities, because these two groups of people are always discriminatorily considered to be less competitive (see: Larwood, Gutek, & Gattiker, 1984). The injurious meanings exerted upon symbolic recognition allow the inequalities between classes and groups not to be temporary but rather to be durable and repeatable. Likewise, the superiority-inferiority structural inequality has to be institutionalized within a symbolic world.

The normative social practice is a certain consequence once the group-based dominance is institutionalized. Due to normativity, social practices are always substituted by synonymous terms, such as "rules," "norms," and "traditions." S. Turner (1994) employed the convenient term "habit" to specify the abstract term "social practice." Specifically, this term depicts a form of repeatable behavior that caused by distinctive mental activity. From this perspective, I argue that the routinized and repeatable practice is consistent with Bourdieu's description of habitus. Bourdieu also incorporated habitus into social practice, defining habitus as structuring dispositions (Bourdieu, 1990b), which characterized habitus as embodied patterns of thinking and action that are intelligible and acceptable within a given sociocultural context (Jodhka et al., 2017). As a sort of identifiable paradigm, thus, the homogeneity of habitus or social practice modes is quite fundamental to, say, whether some level of group-based dominance has been accepted. As a result, the heterogeneity of habitus between social groups or classes is the manifestation of such structural inequality.

2.2.2 Acceptance, Legitimacy, and the Sociocultural Approach

Why do people voluntarily accept the group-based domination? Built on the discussion above, it is necessary to understand how habitus can be shared among a social

group without any intentional calculation. Bourdieu (1990b) ascribed the objective homogenizing of a group or class habitus to the conditions of existence that enable the practice of people to be unconsciously adjusted to a certain rule. In this study, I view this awareness of circumstance as the result of a sociocultural force. That is to say, human voluntary acceptance of domination doesn't result from any risk and pressure that can be anticipated, but rather from human perception of a certain environment. The homogeneity of a group or class habitus is acquired by the way in which people mentally and physically interact with their surroundings. This interaction process is unconsciously constructed by humans, which explains how group-based habitus distinctions are legitimized within a framework through which distinctions are viewed natural and proper. For instance, no one would doubt a middle class group of people in Asia prefer luxury consumption to keep up their high lifestyle.

Rooted in a sociocultural system, the acceptance of human of inequality is understood as an action without intentional deliberation, because socioculture embodies a series of taken-for-granted values and norms. This pattern of thinking and action denotes perceptual processes that are linked to mediated activities (Vygotsky, 1980). The acknowledgement of the fact that human practice and perception are always mediated provides justification to introduce the sociocultural perspective to understand acceptance, since the formation of human awareness is shaped by social/cultural contact and has to be traced to the developmental environment. Therefore, the distinguishing feature of human mental activity and practice is "the internalization of socially rooted and historically developed activities" (Vygotsky, 1980, p.57). In this theory, the mediated activity is internally oriented by a symbolic universe and externally oriented by a tool system (Vygotsky, 1980; Wertsch, 1986). In a manner analogous to the tool use that implies objective human activity, the sign [7] acts as an instrument for psychological activity (Vygotsky, 1980). Given that, it is reasonable to believe that in a completed process of human practice, or habitus, a specific activity has been psychologically mediated. At the micro and macro levels, these practice modes, or habitus, that refer to internalized dispositions, values, and attitudes might explain distinctions in social and economic performances (Charles, 2008; Jodhka et al., 2017). In this current study, an

[7] In this study, I use "sign" and "symbolic recognition" interchangeably.

entire practice system develops out from socioculture.

Since human-specific activities are contributed to through psychological mediation, the practice system is organized through a symbolic world. Vygotsky (1980) emphasized that the creation of signs or signalization could be expressed by a generalized form of the same metaphor. As a matter of fact, in a world of social construction, signs become the carriers of social practice systems, of habitus modes, and of sociocultures. As a sign, for example, "masculine" and "Black" respectively represents some distinct traits, such as leadership or rock music. At the same time, all these signs are placed in structural relation, like gender structure and ethnicity structure. This further reveals that the nature of sociocultures or cultures is expressed through a symbolic dimension (see also: Reckwitz, 2002).

Accordingly, it is the socioculturally rooted psychological process that allows group members to accept shared habitus without intentional deliberation. Such voluntary acceptance of habitus shared by a group or class means the acceptance of the group's position in a structural relation. For humans, it is required to repeat mental activities to accept these rules, norms, and hierarchical arrangements. The perceived longevity of hierarchical systems may increase people's acceptance of inequality, which denotes that the source of legitimacy in a structural relation must be a perceived stable system (Blanchar & Eidelman, 2013). This conclusion was supported by comparative empirical test about the difference between Americans and Indians to describe the legitimacy and justification of the caste system. In this sense, the stability and durability of socioculture organizes human perception in a routinized way, and orients humans to repeatedly accept their positions in a hierarchical system. Human habitus acquired through this acceptance reproduces the social structure from which the habitus develops out of, and in turn the inequality system comes to be viewed as natural and proper. In a meritocratic society, human habitus signifies individual merit. For this reason I regard the class system in state-socialist society as a specific socioculture in order to understand the legitimacy of inequality in today's China, since some state-socialist class inequalities have persisted even after China's economic transformation. In other words, under state socialism, a series of hierarchical arrangements have shaped human practice, which is presumed to signify individual merit in today's China. The relevant

habitus is expected to continue to exist along with some legacies of the socialist social structure. Socioculture, thus, is a novel contributor to a clear understanding of why the inequality resulted from meritocratic competition is perceived to be just and acceptable. The following two chapters will layout how socioculture, as an entire practice system, reproduces inequality, and what exactly persists as socialist socioculture in today's China.

3 Legitimizing Inequality: The Sociocultural Making of the Reproduction of Domination

Within the social sciences, legitimacy is often viewed as a human socio-psychological property characterized by voluntary deference to normative standards (e.g., D. T. Miller, 2001; Tyler, 2006a; Costa-Lopes et al., 2013). Because of legitimacy, people believe that authorities, institutions, and social arrangements are proper and just, and feel that they ought to defer to rules (Tyler, 2006a). One particularly innovative approach that integrates the behavior and mental processes with contextual factors, to explore the source of the legitimacy of inequality is the sociocultural perspective. The legitimacy of inequality, is not only contributed to through the coordinated efforts of the privileged groups, but also through the support provided by under-privileged groups (Stolte, 1983; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Since the sociocultural perspective emphasizes the effect of sociocultural roots on psychological development and on cultural form of behavior (Vygotsky, 1980), legitimacy can be seen as a socioculturally psychological process that makes inequality acceptable. In other words, as a result of meritocratic competition, inequality is legitimized when it reflects a socioculturally rooted domination, which is perceived as proper by both advantage and disadvantaged groups.

In this chapter, the sociocultural approach is interested in two sides. One concerns the process ontology of a social group or class, and the other explains why each group voluntarily tends to accept their position in a structural relation. Both of these sides make an emphasis on how humans attempt to strategically cope with their surroundings. Within Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice, inequality is essentially understood as the distribution of habitus and symbolic capital, indicating that the structural root of inequality is mediated by human habitus. Habitus contributes to the legitimacy of inequality through reproduction, which is to say that legitimate inequality is always reproduced from a society's earlier historical structure. The apparent invisibility of reproduction makes domination appear natural and normal. In line with Bourdieu, habitus signifies a practice system in a given symbolically expressed structure and is

defined as, socioculture. Bourdieu's habitus theory has its applicability to the case of the development of Chinese society. For instance, Y. Wu (2008) found that Bourdieu's theory of the social reproduction of educational inequality is applicable to the context of post-Maoist China. When a merit-based socioeconomic system was established after the Cultural Revolution, the effect of the embodied cultural practice (as a type of habitus) on educational attainments and upward social mobility reemerged. Apart from this, habitus theory is popular in Chinese language articles, which focus on the class structure in reform-era China (e.g., R. Hu & Chen, 2008; Hong & Zhao, 2014)

This chapter is organized as follows: the first section introduces socioculturalism and how it is applied to the construction of social groups and forms of domination. Built on that, the second section adopts the concept of symbolic inequality, to describe the distinctions among social groups in a symbolic universe, and how the rules of the organization of these groups orient and institutionalize intergroup relations and human actions. Then, in order to further depict the internalized actions by social groups and to explain how these embodied dispositions contribute to the reproduction of intergroup relation or domination, Bourdieu's habitus is formally introduced in the third section. Finally, in the last section, based on the entire system of symbolic inequality, habitus, and practice, socioculture is defined as a practice system or a set of internalized values and actions. By choosing this definition, I explain why domination or inequality is natural and generally acceptable to humans.

3.1 Socioculture, Social Group, and Domination

3.1.1 Socioculture and Process Ontology

The sociocultural perspective provides an approach to understanding why people think and behave the way they do without intentional calculation. One fundamental assumption of socioculturalism, thus, is the process ontology, which holds that entities and structures are not existent but rather socially constructed, and that only processes are real (Sawyer, 2002). Contemporary socioculturalism gives us a more comprehensive account of how things are really are, by incorporating constructivism within the traditional sociocultural perspective to explain a learner's practice in a specific milieu through the description of his/her mental activities (Bereiter, 1994). This development

is particularly attributed to the classic Vygotskian model which has been to used to help illuminate learning and cognition in non-academic settings, such as environments that shape development, those of everyday life (Vygotsky, 1980; Bereiter, 1994). Although Vygotsky places an emphasis on the cognitive function in the process of social construction, his theory is, to some extent, incomplete (Frawley, 1997). The focus on cognitive processes in contemporary sociocultural theory has resulted in its wide application to research related to second language acquisition and adult learning (e.g., Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Alfred, 2003).

With regard to the sociocultural perspective, the process ontology mainly concerns cognitive development that focuses on "the role of the individual in constructing reality" (Rogoff, 1990, p.4). But what is cognition or social cognition research actually about? In a recent study, Greifeneder and Bless (2017) attempted to address this by asking: How do individuals process information, and convert their subjective interpretation of the objective situation to the construction into social reality? Indeed, the same inputs usually result in different interpretations by different individuals, which means that the particular way in which an individual constructs his or her social reality is contingent on that individual's feelings and general understanding of himself or herself (Greifeneder & Bless, 2017). Furthermore, differences in cognition between people reflects differences in decision making and interactive histories. In earlier research, humans were not considered as autonomous agents but rather as causal contributors to their motivation and action. Accordingly, shared cognition is a system of "triadic reciprocal causation" (Bandura, 1989, p.1175). In this model, a comprehensive cognitive process should include personal factors, behavioral patterns and environmental events that influence one another bidirectionally as interacting determinants.

Focusing on the environmental factors in the model of triadic reciprocal causation, three particular environmental structures are included: the imposed environment, the selected environment and the constructed environment (Bandura, 1999). The imposed environment is physical and sociocultural thrust upon people whether they like it or not. However, the imposed environment's rewarding and punishing aspects won't come into being until the specific environments, such as certain activities or milieus, are selected. In selected environment, people construct institutional systems in a society

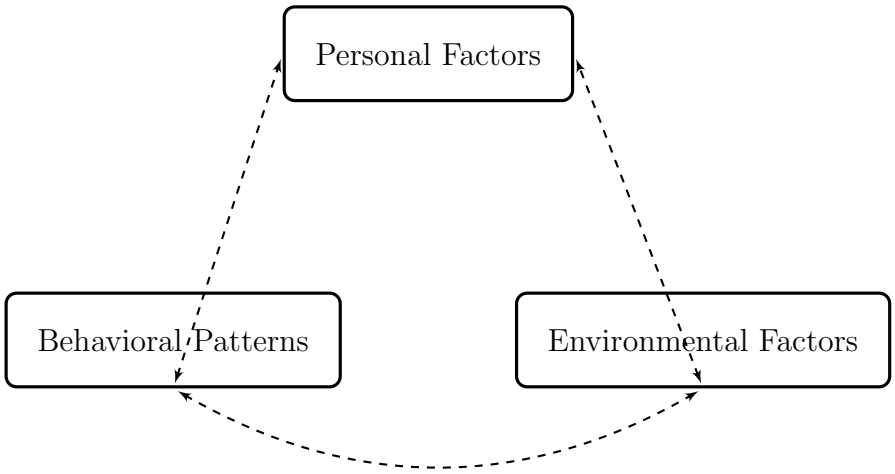


Figure 4: Social cognition model of triadic reciprocal causation

by their generative efforts. It is inevitable for humans to be influenced by routines when they are embedded in certain contexts within a given society, which reveals the nature of human cognitive development as a process of social interaction between institutionalized environments and human activities (see: Rogoff, 1990).

The presence of an imposed environment is the first step in human information processing, learning, and thinking. Cognition, thus, is situated. More precisely, cognition is socioculturally situated, because the use of signs breaks away the biological and physical influences on psychological processes (Vygotsky, 1980; Gee, 1997). Through mediating devices, including signs and general heuristics, embedded values and beliefs guide human mental processes and influence the way how humans feel, think and behave (Valsiner, 2007). Valsiner (2007) thus argued that, as a sociocultural process, human thinking unifies individuals and society within a cultural (semiotic) process of making sense of one's world and of oneself. Social existence, therefore, is the production of human culture-based cognitive processes, which corresponds to the socioculturalists' interpretation of process ontology. Human cognitive structure, by this argument is thus socioculturally organized.

The sociocultural approach thus assumes that social existence is constructed phonemically, through knowledge, value, experience, etc. (Fox, 1998). This view of social existence doesn't reject the mode of existence of social objects but rather emphasizes the subjective interpretation of an object. Presently, humans tend to interpret real-

ity through two cognitive sensory organs: "an epistemic sense of objective-subjective distinction and ontological sense" (J. R. Searle, 1995, p. 8). Epistemically, both "objective" and "subjective" concern the way in which individuals make judgments. And the ontological sense relates to the objective-subjective distinction of the modes of existence, which is crucial to the explanation of process ontology. For example, as an objective territory, the United States of America might be considered either as a dream place or an enemy country. That is to say, it is the forms of human knowledge and feeling that vary the existence of the U.S. To be concrete, the U.S. territory is ontologically objective, since the mode of its existence is independent of human mental states. In contrast, the sense of it being an enemy country or a dream place is a subjective entity, because this mode of existence results from the feeling or perception of subjects. Likewise, seen as a social existence, system structure is framed by the object-generated mental schema (Sewell Jr, 1992). This mental schema includes thoughts, perceptions and actions, which yields human practice. In gender structure, for instance, the binary opposition of male-female social relation radically stems from the physical differences between men and women. For the most part, the gender structure denotes the ontological interpretation of gender relation that people use their mental processes to make sense of the information of physical differences. In this sense, any structural relation in a system gives rise to the construction of a cognitive processes in individuals.

Even though Searle's theory reveals the role of conscious intentionality in the construction of social groups and their belief systems, it overlooks the unconscious dimension of intention in the cognitive processes of making sense of a social world. Although Searle made a contribution to the theory of unconscious states, he failed to systematically link unconscious intentional states to group-based human actions. Compared to conscious intentional states that reflect subjective desires and beliefs that are based on objectivity, an unconscious intentional state in the mind is analogous to a "fish deep in the sea," or "objects stored in the dark attic of the mind" (J. R. Searle, 1991, p. 48). J. R. Searle (1991) further regarded unconsciousness as an altered conscious intention, which characterizes the unconscious as irreducibly subjective. In the following studies, human unconscious states are found to be routinized, through the guidance of the conscious components of working memory (e.g., Baars & Franklin, 2003). In other words,

the mental scheme granted by conscious intention is stored in human memories, which orients humans to unconsciously behave in routine ways in the future. The sociocultural approach brings this stored mental scheme or unconscious intention to light, to emphasize the justifications of social reality and human action.

3.1.2 The Construction of Social Group and Domination

The description above implies another fundamental idea of social constructivism that only by virtue of collective acceptance, recognition, or commitment objective facts exist (e.g., Tuomela, 2003; J. R. Searle, 2006). I will thus look upon this collective acceptance as a criterion for evaluating whether a social existence is legitimate. From this perspective, physical entities act out social roles and gain social status by being collectively created. Tuomela (2003) provided an example to illustrate this mechanism. A squirrel fur can "in principle" be used as money because collective members performatively accept it as currency. Should members of this imaginary collective stop accepting squirrel fur as money, the role and function of squirrel fur as currency will be replaced by something else. In this instance, collective acceptance determines how an object achieves a recognition in society. This collectivism, in the eyes of some scholars, is further linked to how individuals cope within a sociocultural context (e.g., Chun, Moos, & Cronkite, 2006; Kuo, 2013). Theoretically, as one of the coping strategies, collective acceptance needs to be discussed in the context of stress-related reactions to particular kinds of stimuli in social environments (Kuo, 2013).

Up to the present, collective coping has been commonly viewed as stress reactions in ways consistent with several social theories (Morris et al., 1976; Pittner & Houston, 1980; Kuo, 2013). Stress, as in psychological or physiological distress, is caused by either overarousal or underarousal within a personal-environment dynamic (Aldwin, 2007, p.24). Collective coping with stress can be illustrated in a typical case that, social protest is the collective members' reaction towards the stressful experience of devaluing environment (Kaplan & Liu, 2000). The original and complete understanding of collective coping consists of both individual and collective sides (Wagner, Kronberger, & Seifert, 2002). At the collective level, coping is triggered when stress culturally shapes a wide array of responses. To sum up, collective behaviors or efforts are being concep-

tualized as "a constellation of multifaceted stress responses shaped and enhanced by collectivistic norms, values, and tendencies" (Kuo, 2013, p.4).

Based on the universal conclusion that external conditions generate different forms of interaction between collective members and situations, socioculturalists further emphasize human adaptation in the process of coping (Cross, 1995; Aldwin, 2007). As an incorporated concept, adaptation originally consisted of two dimensions, the psychological dimension that refers to the emotional well-being of humans, and the sociocultural dimension that relates to the ability for humans to fit in to the host environment (W. Searle & Ward, 1990; C. Ward & Kennedy, 1996, 1999). In the model of sociocultural theory, the psychological adaptation is best understood in terms of a stress and coping framework. And it is human psychological reactions towards certain contexts that yield culture-specific learning and corresponding behaviors (Lave, 1997; C. Ward & Kennedy, 1999). C. Ward and Kennedy (1999) have noted that, compared to psychological reaction, sociocultural adjustment is rather an emphasis on behavioral competence that is acquired by cultural learning. From this perspective, human behavior has to be interpreted in the sociocultural background in which it takes place, otherwise, it won't be meaningful (Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998).

In the sociocultural paradigm, adaptation means acceptance of the host culture. The concept of sociocultural adaptation has in recent years been extensively adopted in cross-cultural and immigration studies. Through some existing studies, I have found that the measurement of sociocultural adaptation underlines human knowledge about the institutions, norms, and values in a certain context, and to what extent they agree with and follows these culturally appropriate practice (W. Searle & Ward, 1990; C. Ward & Kennedy, 1999). These implications explain why people engage in routine activities. Culturally routine behavior suggests human acceptance of norms in the social space. Being collectively accepted can mean either acceptance of the "I-mode" or acceptance in the "we-mode" (Tuomela, 2003). As a matter of fact, no matter which mode collective acceptance happens, the collective existence is legitimately created.

However, in terms of group construction, collective acceptance must be in the "we-mode," which means group members do not "privately" accept something but rather "together" accept something (Tuomela, 2003, 2013). In Tuomela's work (2013), the

we-mode is built on three criterial notions: the group reason, the collective conditions and the collective commitment. These foundations make it possible for a we-mode to authorize members to act as a unit or a group, and to become committed to the group as well as to each other. As a result, group members have a tendency to engage in cooperative behavior and sharing attitudes (J. R. Searle, 2006). Usually, the we-shared attitude relates to conformity to a group's intentions. In a technical sense, intentionality is believed to play a crucial role in the construction of a social group. Intentionality depicts the feature of minds by which mental states are about something or directed at something (J. R. Searle, 1995, 2006). Desire, belief, and hope are intentional, as these terms embody human perceptions of justification on certain objects. To be concrete, if a social group has a goal it must be a desire that such should be the case. Once the intention of a social group is fixed, the corresponding group-shared thinking, attitudes and actions are routinized and finally become the norms of practice.

In order to examine how the intentionality of a certain social group comes into being, it's necessary to provide a clear definition of social group. Tuomela (2013) said, the collection of the members of a we-mode group is socially constructed as a group. Tuomela's description of social groups is consistent with the prevailing idea that social groups do not only maintain a constructed existence, but also count as "objects" (Hacking, 1999), because people labelled "female," "refugee," "the Anglo-Saxon" are all various collections in the world. Groups, as well as extensions, such as sets and classes, are the divisions or classifications of humans (Tajfel, 1981; Hacking, 1999). But what are the ways of classifying humans? Many scholars agree that both internal power and external power are feasible to divide humans into groups. In Tajfel's 1981 work, they are called internal phenomenal criteria and external experimenters' criteria respectively. Built on internal-external power, Tuomela (2013) then divided we-mode groups into autonomous groups and non-autonomous groups. This autonomy occurs along with a definite internal phenomenon. For instance, skin color, as a physical phenomenon, provides a special condition for people of the same color to be gathered by a racial label. Such a condition rejects people of other colors as members. The racial group, thus, is an obvious case of autonomous group. Contrary to the autonomous group, a non-autonomous group is rather the functioning community or organization whose

establishment relies on the use of external power and control. One non-autonomous group case is the labor union whose operation is processed by the externally authorized leaders.

Conceptually, social class is an extension of the social group. In the contemporary context, social class, social stratification and social structure are often interchangeablly used, and related to the study of the logical order of human agencies' access to capital and status. In this sense, class is not simply equal to group, but rather synonymous to "group status," that is, "a collectivity that chooses to think of itself as a group and is recognized by others as such" (McAll, 1990, p.28). Academically, when scholars speak of social class, they are technically referring to, namely, "upper class," "working class," "middle class" and so on (see: Bourdieu, 1987; McAll, 1990). The explanation and the prediction of the observed distinctions among individuals are allowed by constructing social space (Bourdieu, 1987). Such space, in Bourdieu's eyes, is not the real geographic space, but is rather the space empirically constructed by "the main factors of differentiation which account for observed distinctions in a given social universe," and that exists in the form of "capital" (Bourdieu, 1987, p.3-4). For instance, the inequality that is determined by differences of economic capital is a space. At the same time, Bourdieu noted that people who are close together in social space tend to recognize each other as a collective (Bourdieu, 1989).

Bourdieu's discussion of social space and class leads us to believe that social class is a sort of autonomous group. A shared class comes into being along with the phenomenon that individuals who stand close together in a space recognize and accept each other. In other words, objectively, people with near amount of capital are inclined to together accept their situation. Like other autonomous social groups, this we-mode collective acceptance reveals that class members tend to engage in shared attitudes and behavioral patterns. This togetherness directs them toward collective goals particular to their class or group, which I define as *intentionality* above. In terms of specific social classes, intention reflects the source of justification of the common actions of class members. Intentionality provides the foundation for the construction of a social group or class. By this means, it is reasonable to believe that the intention-yielded attitudes and behavioral patterns draw the class boundaries in the social structure.

In this study, I hold the idea that collectively acceptance existence not only means a group or a class member's commitment to the group's situation, but also signifies their simultaneous acceptance of domination. That being said, as a structural relation, class domination is also a we-mode collectively accepted existence. The sociocultural paradigm, actually, acknowledges that human adaptation to certain domination is implicit the acceptance of a host culture. In line with Vygotsky (1980)'s model, sociocultural forces shape psychological dispositions through cognitive processes. This cognition is developed through everyday learning in a given context, and further evolves into the internalized practice. When referring to class domination, specifically, cognition refers to voluntary acceptance of class status. Ontologically, it is such cognition that justifies the existence of domination.

Additionally, justified or legitimated domination signifies that the thought processes and actions of a group or a class member a mediated by situated cognition. A disadvantaged group member tends to behave in a way that corresponds to an inferior position. A typical example concerns the gender domination. For a long time, women have preferentially choosen low-risk professions while men have tended to play dominating roles in society, like serving in political positions. In the sociocultural paradigm, this psychological mediation is viewed as a communication system governed by semantic rules and codes that can be abstracted as a sign-system, since the social class and domination are socially and culturally constructed (Hebdige, 1979; Bourdieu, 1979; Vygotsky, 1980). In this sense, sociocultural process or cultural process is constructed upon the communication-functioned sign-system and means that "the most taken-for-granted phenomena can function as signs" (Hebdige, 1979, p. 13). In this sense, human actions are symbolically mediated (Rehbein & Souza, 2015; Jodhka et al., 2017). As a practice system, moreover, the sociocultural environment exists in the form of a symbolic world, which characterizes legitimated domination as symbolic domination.

3.2 Symbolic Domination and Practice

3.2.1 Symbolic Capital and Inequality

The symbolic mediation of practice makes group or class distinctions appear to be naturalized. A group or class's belief, which I call *intentionality*, can be seen as a symbolic guarantee. This guarantee, in academic works, is defined as symbolic power that constitutes world-making, or the construction of social reality (Bourdieu, 1979, 1989). In the sociocultural paradigm, power in a symbolic world constructs and justifies social order or domination, which leads to the search for distinctions through the tracking of symbolic logic (Bourdieu, 1986). Symbolic power, therefore, enables a certain group or class members to engage in discriminatory practice modes, such as racism. Under this circumstance, symbolic capital is an effective instrument for the maintenance of domination.

And what exactly is symbolic capital? With regard to the cognitive function, symbolic capital is a credit that grants people who hold sufficient recognition within a collective to be in a position to impose recognition (Bourdieu, 1989, 1990b) . Simply speaking, a symbol is a form of recognition. Symbolic capital brings about relevant profits, through its function as an instrument of cognition and communication. Symbolic capital is exhibited in various forms of recognition, such as titles, prestige, or gender/ethnicity identity, to construct the distinctions in a symbolic world. For instance, if a person holds a Ph.D. degree, then almost no one would doubt that his/her knowledge in the subject for which the degree was obtained, compared to outsiders. And a woman is likely to be doubted in ability when she runs for public office. These illustrations suggest that symbolic capital can be converted into other capitals. X. Zhang (2004) used the case of China's land reform, to illustrate how class status as symbolic capital transformed into political capital during that period. For Bourdieu, symbolic capital is thought to be one of the mechanisms that "make capital go to capital" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.120).

Symbolic capital thus institutionalizes social domination. Due to the cognitive function, labeling recognition may remind one of social psychology and symbolic interactionism, theoretical schools that examine phenomena that underlines the intellectual-

cognitive experiences that generate the constitution of social group identity (Lamont & Fournier, 1992). A certain cognitive process or experience is shaped along with the objective world, thereby turning into a subjective structure. In Bourdieu's eyes, this transformation moves from symbolic objects to symbolic forms (Bourdieu, 1979). That is to say, the entire symbolic universe is built on objective phenomena, which makes all symbolic recognitions equipped with internal objectivity. If a constructed social identity is associated with symbolic recognition, then its formation can be simplified as a process that turns objective divisions into recognized symbolic classifications, and then into internalized cognitive experiences, and finally into institutionalized distinctions. In this process, the most crucial is that human objective divisions have to establish the rules of collective adaptation toward environmental stress. Otherwise, these divisions won't be institutionalized. As shown in Figure 5, only through collective coping norms can an objective division be recognized. Take an example of racism. It was the slave trade during the age of discovery that led to the race-based divisions which shaped human cognitive interpretations and led to the institutionalized domination of this classification system in modern society. When the characteristics of objective divisions are embodied in symbolic recognitions, such as "Ph.D." signifying knowledgable and "male" signifying power, the sociocultural foundation of domination has been established.

Unequal access to symbolic capital has given rise to a phenomenon that is called "symbolic inequality" (Jodhka et al., 2017, p. 11). As an expression of the logical order of a social structure, symbolic inequality rather suggests that domination is institutionalized and the distinctions have become built in a apparently way. Functionally, symbolic capital is used to legitimize social domination mainly through two steps. The first concerns the establishment of a coherent belief system, that is, the underlying prejudices or stereotypes toward lower class groups of people, indexed by recognitions. As mentioned above, belief systems are about characteristics and are established through objective divisions inherent in particular collective coping rules. Practically, the "black" and "female," are typically believed to lack professional competitiveness in labor market. As another example, in political elections, as a heuristic symbol, party identification has a significant effect on voters stereotypes regarding a

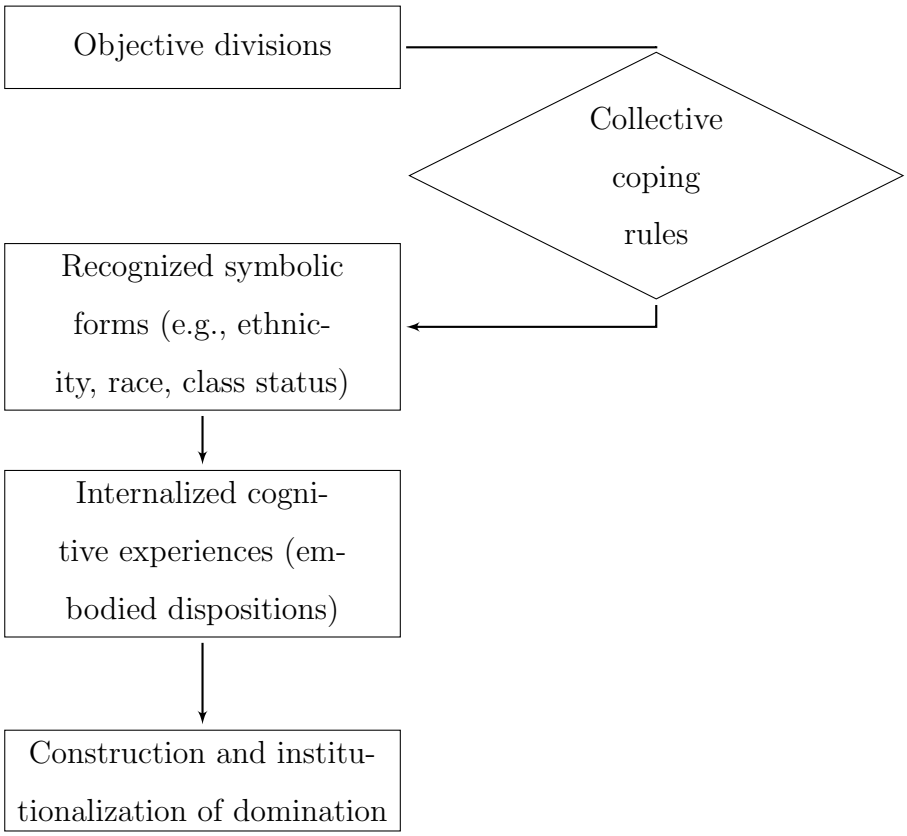


Figure 5: Process of the formation of institutionalized social distinctions and domination

candidate's issue predispositions (Sears, Lau, Tyler, & Allen, 1980). For instance, a "Republican presidential candidate" in the United States is usually seen to be more conservative in some social issues, such as abortion and immigration. In the domain of the social sciences, the term "symbolic violence" is referred to describe such non-physical discriminatory implications via different recognitions between social groups (Henry & Sears, 2002; Jodhka et al., 2017). Secondly, it is quite necessary for symbolic characteristics to pass on from one generation to the next. Essentially, the inheritance of symbolic characteristics not only maintains the privileges of superior groups' privileges, but also leads to inferior group members becoming involved in sustained deprivation of capital, which allows domination to be taken for granted. In this sense, as a manifestation of legitimation, institutionalization particularly reflects that domination or inequality in society has been naturalized invisibly, and can be reproduced (see also: Jodhka et al., 2017).

3.2.2 Symbolic Power and the Making of Practice

Getting back to the earlier discussion, it is the practice that directs and institutionalizes the merits and dispositions of individual agents. I will now employ a conceptual framework of practice, developed by Bourdieu, to describe embodied dispositions and explore the way how they become naturalized (Sweetman, 2009). This framework has systematically associated symbolic capital to the logic of practice, and has helped explained how society operates through the cognitive function of recognitions. Bourdieu's theory on practice has recently been reduced to the following model that I adopt in this study, that is, practice as a routinized or institutionalized type of behavior that constitutes various forms: body and mental activities, background knowledges of being understood, things and their use, and so on (Reckwitz, 2002). For Bourdieu, humans behave like "virtuoso" with commends of their "art of living," because they tend to do things the right way (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 8). The appropriate selection of conduct for a given situation, or the "sense," as I discuss above, is the rule-yielding strategic coping by agents. The art of living, then, was theoretically developed by Bourdieu in his explanation of the norms that explicitly govern practice.

In one of his more well known books, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977),

Bourdieu used "the 'rules' of honor to the 'sense' of honor" to trace how a practice mode is established. Conferring an honor on a man requires judgments about whether the man is thought to be able to play the game of honor appropriately and well (Bourdieu, 1977). In this sense, the rule of honor implies a principle that is equivalent to a practical scheme that enables trained agents to make correct judgments about honor, further characterizing the honor as a mutual recognition. The repeated operation of a rule which I call knowledge learning and consumption, in this case generates a disposition called the "sense of honor" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 15). As a disposition, sense of honor or sense of the game, becomes inculcated in one's earlier years of life and suggests a scheme of thoughts enabling each agent to engender practices naturally consistent with the logic of a ritual world (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu explained that a rule in this social game is a simple regularity that is derived not only from a law or quasi-law, but also from a custom, formula, and even proverb, thus forming normative facts (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986). In addition to that, the sense term refers to a feel for the game, emphasizing human subjective choice of the best possible match to what a game requires (Bourdieu, 1977; Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986).

Usually, human experiences are not acquired through the rules or norms, but rather by means of feelings and selections. However, these rules and norms do provide knowledge to humans about what is correct, and characterize human actions as intuitive products of knowing such rules of the game, called "strategies" by Bourdieuian scholars (e.g., Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990; Gherardi, 2000). A practice mode is shaped through experiencing the "sense" that is situated appropriate strategy. For a social group or class, it is the shared sense of honor that determines whether an action is acceptable or sanctionable (A. King, 2000). But what do the term "sense" and "strategy" mean when they are interchangeably applied to the theory of practice? Bourdieu pointed out that acquisition of a practical sense in a social game begins in an individual's childhood, through participation in social activities (Bourdieu, 1977; Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986). Different from the rule of the game that appears to be based on quasi-juridical principle[8], on one hand, the sense of the game embodied in the agent

[8]The quasi-juridical is one of the connotations of rules, referring to a clearly objectified and consciously held precept (see: Lizardo, 2010).

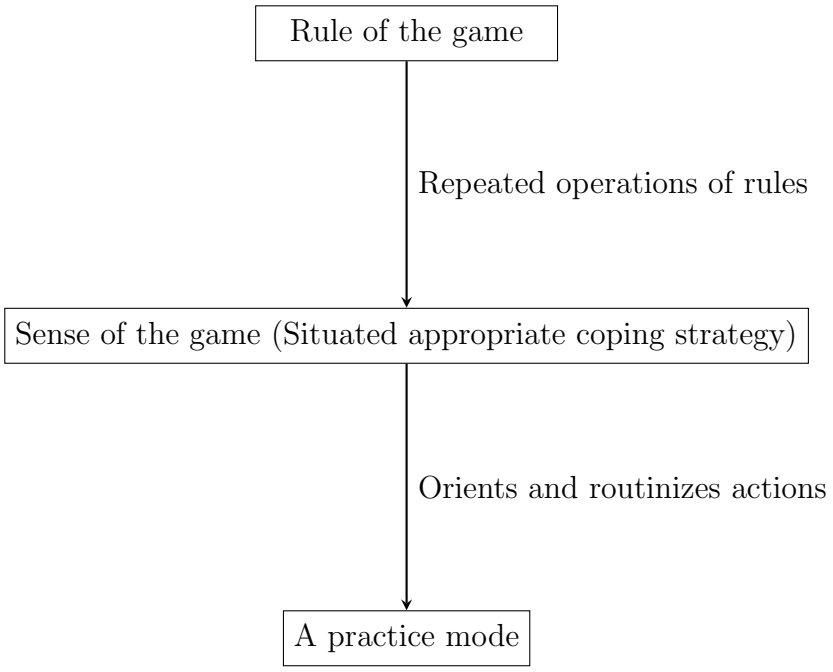


Figure 6: Making of a practice

that orients and adjusts actions according to the relevant rules (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986). On the other hand, strategy is viewed as an agent's coping actions that are based on a sense of the social game (Chia & Holt, 2006; Vaara & Whittington, 2012). The formation of the sense of the social game virtually routinizes human actions and, as a result, human behaviors can be executed with minimal conscious control in a given context (W. Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977; Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977; Ajzen, 2002). For example, going to the hospital, for most people, is an appropriate coping strategy when sick, and then becomes a situated routine that doesn't require much focused deliberation. Hence, as shown in Figure 6, no matter the identity of the individual or group agent, the routinization of strategic coping is the core mechanism for accessing a practice mode (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011).

The human practice has a logic (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990b). In the following studies, the nature of this logic is interpreted as the practical sense, and it should be noted that this practical logic contradicts the Lévi-Straussian model of logical logic, that reduces action to structure (Lau, 2004). The Bourdieuian approach views practice directly as a product of practical sense, which assumes social sensitivities as guides to human actions (Wacquant, 1992; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). By associating appro-

priateness with the sense of the game, Bourdieu believed that the logic in practice to some extent denotes the human tendency to take the things of logic for the logic of things (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this sense, practice is commonly recognized as a strategic interest-pursuing act. Despite this, Bourdieu and his followers do not see logical practice as rational activity but rather strategy, because the term "rationality" explains the actions of agents by the direct efficacy of cause, but ignores the effect of agents' individual and collective histories on production and reproduction of actions through the internalization of preferences (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Evens, 1999). Given the nature of strategic intuition, the logical practice usually appears to be naturalized and without intentional deliberation. As Bourdieuian scholars have said, strategy, within the logic of practice, conveys the purpose of legitimation of social order (see: Harker et al., 1990).

When the logic of practice is placed in a framework of social group domination, it is necessary to add the concept "symbolic capital" and "symbolic power" to understand how an agent's strategy is imposed and maintained in the group, since society is a social space where people exist in relation to one another based on the distribution of status honor. As the starting point of the legitimation of domination, the objective divisions, in a socially constructed world, have been transformed into representations granted by a symbolic universe (Bourdieu, 1979; Wacquant, 1992). In this system, the representation acts as a communication instrument to guide the way in which humans interact with each other. For most people, it is significant to use a medium of communication to negotiate with others in the first phase. The recognition, which carries symbolic capital, is viewed as guarantor, to promote the interaction and to guarantee the deal of domination once it has been made (Bourdieu, 1979).

The claim here is that symbolic capital generates an invisible "symbolic power". Contrary to the visible power in everywhere, Bourdieu introduced the notion of symbolic power in his work *Language and Symbolic Power*, as the invisible power which "can be excised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it" (Bourdieu, 1991, p.164). Essentially, due to the unequal distribution of symbolic capital, the exercise of such power also contains the discriminatory meaning and inevitably generates symbolic violence.

It is actions with discriminatory implications that establish the sense of the hierarchical order and the social world (see also: Bourdieu, 1979). Bourdieu emphasized that symbolic power can be exercised only if it is recognized. That is to say, symbolic recognition is automatically granted "a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world" (Bourdieu, 1991, p.170). Accordingly, symbolic power has become the taken-for-granted force of legitimate pronouncement, to further classify, authorize and represent the world (Loader, 1997).

The specific pattern of actions embodied in symbolic recognition becomes a practice mode. By making the constructed world taken-for granted symbolic capital and its power suggest a sociocultural root to make a practice mode meaningful. That is to say, even if strategic coping occurs without deliberation, the action of an individual agent or a group agent is meaningful because its embodied logic is symbolically mediated. In this sense, sociocultural environment, as a practice system, can be particularly conceptualized as a symbolic domination system. The dispositions linked to macro symbolic domination not only determine the logic in micro-level practice, but also reflect in such certain practice tendencies, which bound symbolic power, interaction, and the emergent mediated order (Hallett, 2003). When the practice modes of social groups are known as symbolic characteristics, a social order or hierarchy is symbolically negotiated. I borrow the concept *stereotype* from social psychology, defined as an abstract impression of a certain category of person, acquired from the earlier experiences (R. Gordon, 1949; Tajfel, 1982; Sherman, 1996), to describe such group-based symbolic characteristics. Just like the implicit cognition contained in stereotypes that automatically activate actions (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996), in accordance with Bourdieu's discussion (1979) of the cognitive function of symbolic power, symbolic characteristics contribute to intergroup attitudes and behavior in the form of specific action tendencies (Tajfel, 1982; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). In terms of social domination, action tendencies include the discriminatory or injurious meaning of superior groups (i.e., male, elite class people, natives), as well as the acceptance of inferior groups (i.e., female, lower class people, immigrants) to being discriminated against. From the perspective of legitimation, thus, symbolically mediated intergroup interactions allow domination to be

viewed as proper and acceptable.

3.3 Habitus and Reproduction

3.3.1 Capital, Field, and Habitus

In order to deeply investigate how human practice is mediated to become acceptable and naturalized from a sociocultural perspective, it is crucial to introduce a concept of *habitus*. The idea of habitus is one of Bourdieu's most influential academic legacies, because it not only saves Bourdieu's theory from becoming a position of rationalist formalism with disembodied agents engaging in strategies to the accumulation of various capital, but it also allows Bourdieu to analyze the social agent as a embodied actor whose dispositions are affected by the real physical and institutional configuration of the field (Lizardo, 2004). Thus, the interpretation of Bourdieu's work on habitus must be associated with two other highly relevant concepts: capital and field. In Bourdieu's eyes, the social genesis is twofold, one is the scheme of thoughts, beliefs and behaviors which are collectively called "habitus" and the other is the social structure, which is called the "field" or, ordinarily, "social class" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 14). In this sense, the distribution of the forms of capital denotes how a field is set and constituted. Habitus, then, is the result of internalized understanding of a certain field by agents, or even of the entire social world (see also: Bourdieu, 1989). In the following section, I will provide comprehensive theoretical introductions of these concepts respectively. In addition, a thorough knowledge of habitus is necessary to understand how a practice mode is organized in a cognitive way, and how it develops into a particular socioculture.

The introduction of the notion of capital is of vital importance in understanding the social world. In Bourdieu's theories, capital is a crucial conceptual apparatus to bridge field and habitus (Mahar, Harker, & Wilkes, 1990). His concept of capital identifies three main dimensions: economic, social and cultural capital. The ownership and possession of these three resources are legitimized through the mediation of symbolic capital (Siisiainen, 2003). All these objectified or embodied forms define capital, briefly, as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in an identical form. That is to say, capital contains "a tendency to persist in its being" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 15). In this sense, capital is available in the form of force that implies the struggle

for the imposition (Mahar et al., 1990; Siisiainen, 2003). For Bourdieu, capital is the basis of domination (Mahar et al., 1990).

More importantly, capital is convertible, which makes the capital-based domination legitimate. In addition to being a social force, capital also acts as a social nexus within an exchange system, to associate all tangible and visible resources with the worth of being sought. Such convertibility is consistent with Lin's interpretation of capital as representative of an investment with expected returns in a marketplace (N. Lin, 1999). A typical example is that educational qualifications as cultural capital are expected to be turned into economic earnings. The most powerful conversion, however, happens to symbolic capital, for it is often the only legitimate way to accumulate various forms of capital (Mahar et al., 1990; Smart, 1993). In a structural relation, the effect of all tangible and visible capital of imposition maintains through the conversion to symbolic capital. Only through the conversion into invisible capital that is available in the form of honorable or prestigious recognition, can an advantageous person or class naturally be accepted as legitimate authority (Mahar et al., 1990).

All forms of capital make sense in a given field. Generally, the English word field refers to the space of autonomous social microcosms, such as religious field, intellectual field, artistic field. In Bourdieu's eyes, the field is closely associated with social space. Religion, economy, and art are analogous to social spaces or fields. A large field can be divided into a series of subfields, for instance, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism are all subfields of religion. Bourdieu's concept of field contains three important analogies: the field where a football game plays, a field in science fiction, and a field of force in physics (Thomson, 2008). The football field is a site where the positions of players are represented in visual form, and the game of football has its specific rules that players must learn. Bourdieu believed that the social field looks like a football that consists of positions occupied by agents or players, and what happens in the game is boundarized, or organized (Thomson, 2008). Not only that, but the fact that this competitive game happens on a football field means that players or agents have to make strategies to maintain and to improve their positions, which further reveal the configuration of a field depending on how various forms of capital are distributed (Bourdieu, 1989, 1991). Science fiction force-fields refers to Bourdieu's description of a field or a space as a

cosmos that obeys its own laws (Bourdieu, 2005). Through these laws, the rules of field behavior are justified and routinized, and finally become the logic of practice within a field (see also: Thomson, 2008).

Last but not least, the field of force in physics is quite crucial for understanding Bourdieu's field. The force exerted by one object on anther suggests that a field could be thought to be a composition of opposing forces (Thomson, 2008). These forces, stressed by Bourdieu, operate similar to the accumulation of cultural capital and economic capital. Given that, the field is characterized to be magnetic, with agents' positions determined by the structural relationship between these forces (Thomson, 2008). Extensively, in academic terms, a field could been defined as "a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). From this perspective, as long as a setting locates agents and their positions, it can be seen as a field; from a religious field to a football field, from a physical field to a field of social structure.

Capital, field, and habitus are directly connected. The value of capital is related to the characteristics of an agent's habitus (Bourdieu, 1984; Mahar et al., 1990). Seen as one of the most influential academic legacies by Pierre Bourdieu, habitus, has been retrieved and reworked rather than invented by this French sociologist. As a matter of fact, this term can be originally traced back to Aristotle's account of "hexis". In Aristotle's eyes, hexis is regarded as a set of habitual dispositions that are instilled in early education and experiences, and which orient human feelings, desires, activities and self representations (Burkitt, 2002; Wacquant, 2016). This everyday habit suggests unthinking and durable routine of behavior. The latin word "habitus" was proposed by Marcel Mauss to replace hexis and other synonyms, such as "habit," "habitude," and "acquired ability" because habitus denotes that human habits vary not only with individuals and their institutions, but also between societies, properties, educations, and forms of prestige (Mauss, 1973; Burkitt, 2002). In this sense, habitus has an implication that integrates human habitual dispositions into a framework of sociological studies, and connects actions to the situated appropriateness.

Compared to the "rules" or the "norms" that regulate human actions in the game, Bourdieu reintroduced and further developed the concept of *habitus* as a sense of the

game (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1977). The technical term habitus is thus borrowed by Bourdieu to describe such people's strategies or choices that are not the product of obedience to a rule, but of a feel for a game (Bourdieu, 1990a). In line with this, Bourdieu and his followers then questioned how social structure and individual agency can be reconciled, by addressing habitus as a concept of structuralism. As a production of the structures constitutive of a particular context, habitus comprises a structured and structuring structure (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2008). Here, "structuring" can be viewed as the tendency without conscious reference to the norms, and be "structured" by earlier environments wherein experience and knowledge have been attained (Bourdieu, 1990b; Sewell Jr, 1992; Maton, 2008).

Theoretically, it is necessary to bring structured and structuring parts together to follow the implication of habitus. It is quite significant to first emphasize that, habitus is characterized as a durable and stable disposition, and that such durability or stability signifies a human's way of being, or a habitual state. The generated dispositions, including beliefs, perceptions, feelings and behavioral patterns, reveal the underlying structuring principles of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2008). In this study, therefore, I call these structuring principles the logic of the sense of a game to orient the future practice. If habitus has been acknowledged as human dispositions or tendencies without any intentional calculation, then the habitus is structured by a structure (Bourdieu, 1990b). For some time now, the word "structured" has been used as an technical term in cognitive psychology. For instance, in social psychology, imagination is structured in the sense that imagination is directed by past stored knowledge (T. B. Ward, 1994). Given that, I prefer to see "structured" as a word used to describe how human minds process the rules of society, in which the most crucial processing is internalization, and only by internalization can the rules in society be transformed into a sense. The assembly of structured and structuring parts suggests that the logic contained in habitus is the unconscious reasoning cultivated through the internalization of the norms or rules in structural relation. Such interpretations enable us to understand how Bourdieu described habitus in his sociological studies:

> "The habitus is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures

> (e.g. of language, economy, etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms (which one can, if one wishes, call individuals) lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.85).

Habitus, when applied to relevant studies, is seen as the embodied dispositions or tendencies to behave in ways that human agents have learned (Rehbein, 2015; Jodhka et al., 2017). It is the capital that determines tendencies. At the same time, human habitus has to match the logic of how a field is organized, that is, the "unwritten rules of the game underlying practices within that field" (Maton, 2008, p.57). It is Bourdieu's notion of habitus that captures the genesis of a practice mode. Additionally, as the internalized logic of action, practice appears to be meaningful only when it is associated with a given setting. In short, practice can be viewed as the habitus in a given condition. For example, as a practice mode, women's social participation only makes sense in secular industrialized societies. Such relationship between capital, field, habitus and practice can be summarized in accordance with a formula as follow:

[(Habitus)(Capital)]+Field=Practice (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101)

Although Bourdieu's ideas on habitus have been followed and employed by an increasing number of social scientists, it is inevitable even for him to receive some criticism. Up to now, the critique of Bourdieu's habitus mainly concerns two aspects: habitus and social change, and the reductiveness of the habitus (A. King, 2000; Lau, 2004). About the former, the critics have pointed out that, since habitus describes a system of durable internalized dispositions that are appropriate to the structural relations in a field, a society should reproduce itself. Therefore, logically, it seems impossible for social changes and revolutions (e.g., Brubaker, 1985; Evens, 1999; A. King, 2000). To solve this problem, Bourdieu employed a notion of hysteresis effect to integrate social change into the theory of habitus. When the environment that humans encounter is different from the one to which they have already been adjusted, there will be a lag time for humans to acquire new habitus to catch up with the emerging

objective conditions (Bourdieu, 1990b; A. King, 2000; Maton, 2008). It is worth noting that, the hysteresis of habitus is quite important for us to analyze and understand domination or inequalities in transformation societies.

The latter concerns how habitus reproduces social relations. In most works, habitus is seen by Bourdieu to provide a convincing account of social reproduction, because it plays a mechanical role of imposing prior social structure on individuals' tendencies (A. King, 2000). In other words, this reductiveness characterizes humans to be the self-deluded followers of social rules or regularities (A. King, 2000; Schrift, 2014). Accordingly, such reductiveness has been rejected by Bourdieu in his critique of the structuralist account of gift exchanges, and leaves him to be criticized as an objectivist (e.g., Evens, 1999; A. King, 2000; Mouzelis, 2000; Lau, 2004). It's undeniable that, nevertheless, Bourdieu's real intention is to introduce a subject-object dualism to overcome the problems of structuralist objectivism, which makes an emphasis on embodied habitus as a naturalized way of trying to manipulate and control the structural relations. As is well known, habitus has been seen as the most successful explanation of social reproduction, while the challenge of making habitus a non-reductive concept remains (Lau, 2004; Archer, 2004). In order to avoid being a reductionistic explanatory tool, it is necessary to construct habitus as a concept that explains both change and reproduction (see also: Lau, 2004). Referring to Jodhka et al. (2017)'s study on the operationalization of habitus, therefore, I try to investigate how human agencies react to milieu and how habitus works out in my empirical analysis.

3.3.2 Habitus and the Reproduction of Symbolic Boundaries

In Bourdieu's eyes, reproduction is either biological reproduction that denotes the heredity of physical traits, or social reproduction that concerns the maintenance of social order or relationships. The biological and the social reproduction of human agencies are objectively concerted, assigned by a series of principles that govern human tendencies and constitute a particular mode of reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977). In terms of the reproduction of social order in a meritocratic society, the maintenance of domination doesn't concern the visible capital but rather concerns invisible value, which means that inequality is reproduced through the invisible symbolic domination

(Haeri, 1997; Rehbein & Souza, 2015; Jodhka et al., 2017). Bourdieu took marriage as an example to describe how social order or hierarchy is reproduced by symbolic capital. He believed that marriage is an effective tool to strengthen practical kinship or relationships, because the family plays a decisive role in the maintenance of social order (Bourdieu, 1977, 1996). As the central unit in a society, family takes responsibility to accumulate and to transmit the capital in different forms, and it safeguards its unity for accumulation and transmission. In this case, marriage is a reproduction strategy to protect the privilege and value of the family name. The social order that is maintained and inherited by marriage, essentially, is the reproduction of symbolic boundaries.

Since it has been acknowledged that logical order in social structure is expressed by symbolic inequality, as well as the symbolic making of social reproduction, how does habitus make symbolic reproduction possible? To answer this is of vital significance to the exploration of why habitus is about reproduction. The continuance of the value of symbolic capital is the consequence of the transmission of habitus between generations, which makes habitus a reproducible social world. In agreement with Bourdieu, many scholars believe that habitus contains a kind of genetic information that allows successive generations to inherit dispositions from the earlier generations (Swartz, 1997; Crossley, 2003). The inheritance and transmission of habitus from one generation to the next reveal the likelihood that the psychosocial categories are genetically hard-wired in human bodies as well (Silva, 2016). Bourdieu's emphasis on the individual subjectivity-societal objectivity dualism in habitus therefore suggests that the physical body is simultaneously socialized (Swartz, 1997).

From a behavioral perspective, habitus is shaped by a distinct social-psychological experience that is deeply related to a given cultural condition (e.g., Lizardo, 2004; Bonilla-Silva, Goar, & Embrick, 2006). More specifically, it is the human observation and participation in social closure that make it possible for humans to acquire habitus. Habitus, as a result, "helps normalize and legitimize social closure" (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2006, p. 233). By social closure Max Weber meant the process by which social collectivities seek to monopolize various resources for achieving or maintaining privileged positions in a society (S. K. Sanderson, 2007). Weber's notion of closure in sociology virtually entails that social closure is the basis for class formation and class structure

(Parkin, 1974). Practically, attempts at closure occur along many lines, including gender, ethnicity, class, language, etc. By observing these, it is found that social closure suggests the picking over of an identifiable social or physical attribute as the justifiable basis of exclusion (Parkin, 1974). The identifiable attribute, is what we call "symbolic recognition".

The construction of symbolic boundaries simultaneously favors privileged groups but impedes devalued groups (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2006). Social closure, to some extent, leads habitus to be restricted within a symbolic boundary, which leads human habitus to vary with symbolic recognitions (Bourdieu, 1989). In this sense, the maintenance or even reinforcement of symbolic boundaries is conditioned by the inheritance of habitus. Up to the present, the underlying relationship between habitus and symbolic capital has been more often revealed through psychological perspectives. Overall speaking, the symbolic capital possessed by humans always reminds human agencies of the recognition of their hierarchical positions (Steinmetz, 2006). It is the cognitive function of self identification contained in symbolic capital that generates power to orient humans to behave in given ways without intentional calculation (Bourdieu, 1979). This has been systematically pointed out by Pierre Bourdieu in his theory of practice. The core of Bourdieu's idea of human practice is the emphasis on the unconscious intentional state in a specific context. Although a distinct tendency is linked to a symbolic recognition, nevertheless, such tendency, that is called "habitus", is not a direct product of symbolic recognition but rather a product of history that produces practice modes (see also: Harker & May, 1993). Thus, symbolic recognition can be more precisely understood as a storage device to ensure the active presence of past experiences and knowledges. Practically, these past experiences provide a guarantee of the correctness of practices and their constancy over time (Harker & May, 1993), the symbolic capital or recognition, virtually, plays the role of a reminder to humans to maintain tendencies. For instance, as a recognition, "male" always reminds the masculine to play a leading role in gender relations, which is deeply influenced by the earlier historical gender dominance.

Habitus must be regarded not only in terms of acquisition and generativity, but also in terms of reproduction of power and position-taking (Noble & Watkins, 2003).

According to Bourdieu, the reproductive nature of habitus proposes a model of mediation and process that suggests human agencies engage in an educational system that includes teachers, parents, friends, etc. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). It is educational institutions, such as schools, wherein naturalizing human habitus becomes a most effective filter in the reproductive processes of a hierarchical society, because schools enable habitus to be transformed into cultural capital (Harker, 1990; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). In Bourdieu's theory, social classifications are transformed and projected by academic classification. More specifically, in educational institutions, the habitus that represents the culture of a class or a group acts as a guarantee of academic grades and educational qualifications for the students, so that social value comes to be identified as personal value (Bourdieu, 1984; Harker, 1990). Accordingly and briefly, in highly differentiated societies, habitus traits become more akin to class and status-group subculture, and more closely associated with individual merit (see also: Swartz, 1997; Jodhka et al., 2017). The reproduction of social hierarchy, hence, is the result of the inheritance or maintenance of a group-based social traits.

Similarly, if social domination is understood in terms of symbolic inequality, habitus traits appear to be analogous to symbolic characteristics. In addition, it is the cognitive function of symbolic recognition that further explains why Bourdieu's theory on education and habitus makes sense. As symbolic recognition has its cognitive function to orient and remind humans to follow "the sense of a game" to retain the class-relevant habitus traits, a certain habitus is passed on from one generation to the next, and symbolically distinguishes itself from other groups or classes. The symbolic function of group labels transforms social differences into personal values by unconscious self-control. On that note, Jodhka et al. (2017) have been pointed out that, some groups with less symbolic value, such as people of color, women, and lower class people have never been able to acquire the equal merit with others, because they have inherited less valuable social traits. For this reason, habitus, and its maintenance, promote the homogeneity and the solidarity for the symbolic in-group, which indeed reinforces symbolic boundaries and even more reproduces domination (see: Figure 7).

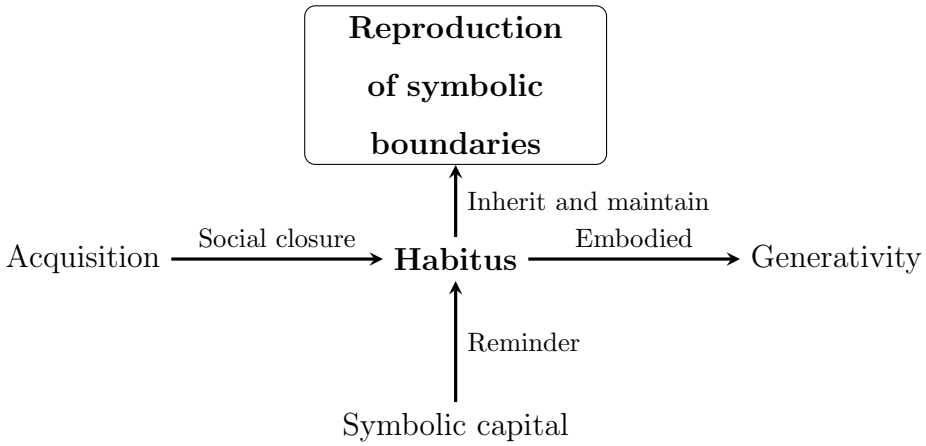


Figure 7: How habitus reproduces symbolic boundaries

3.4 How Socioculture Legitimizes Domination

3.4.1 Socioculture: An Internalized Practice System

Sociocultural studies emphasize human mental activities, and their learning processes from a given milieu (e.g., Vygotsky, 1980; Bereiter, 1994). In most academic works in the social sciences, social milieu is viewed as a non-academic setting, describing how humans learn from their everyday lives and make appropriate decisions. In general, milieu can be a closed place, such as a school, family, working place, etc., or a political institution, or class milieu (Reiss, 1951; W. B. Miller, 1958; Garrahan, 1977). In terms of social domination, milieu concerns two dimensions, one concerning the whole social hierarchy at the macro level, and the other concerning the particular class/group milieu at the meso level. Both two levels of milieus contribute to human cognitive development about social domination at the micro level.

On one hand, class milieu orients human thinking and behavioral patterns. Class community is a social closure that is characterized by a set of value systems, which define a class as a distinct cultural system. In a closure, one is accepted as a class member only through acting in conformity with the traditional and long-established value system defined by the class. W. B. Miller (1958) gave an example of the lower class in the U.S., to illustrate why and how the lower class milieu exerts a direct influence on deviant behaviors. He stressed that "trouble," "excitement," "toughness" are the very typical features of lower class culture, which characterized lower class

culture as a generating milieu of crime, because in-group members have to adhere to the underlying behavioral standards within that community. More broadly, human psychological motivations relate to group norms virtually reveals the nature of cultural force that provokes the feelings of belonging and presence (W. B. Miller, 1958; Rogers & Lea, 2005).

On the other hand, by the whole social structure, milieu represents how various class milieus are linked together and hierarchically organized to form a larger context (Gerth & Mills, 1953; Stinchcombe, 1986). When milieu is structured, it develops discriminatory control of one group over the other (Reiss, 1951; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). In a structured milieu, individuals are assigned to social roles along with the spatial boundaries, which signifies the collective role as a status position in a structural system. Roles, by definition, are interpersonal. That is, "what we think ourselves are decisively influenced by what others think of us" (Gerth & Mills, 1953, p. 11). Essentially, the definition of role further reveals human attitudes towards intergroup domination, and such attitudes have been proposed as psychological mechanisms to explain why it is possible for inequality to be maintained (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2003). This psychological mechanism, is the social dominance orientation (SDO) that I discuss in the introduction chapter. Usually, a high SDO level indicates the preference for hierarchy, not only for privileged groups, but also for the disadvantaged groups. At the same time, Sidanius and Pratto (2001) stressed, the stability of intergroup hierarchical relations implies that group-relevant norms and values have been compatible with higher SDO level. Specifically, a structured milieu emphasizes hierarchical preference as an important dimension of the cultural system of a class. For instance, in a male dominated society, the behavioral norms that men have control over the resources and women voluntarily play marginalized roles, reflects the value systems of these two gender groups respectively. All distinct lifestyles of classes are defined objectively and sometimes subjectively in and through their mutual relationships (Bourdieu, 1984). In this sense, in terms of social structure, it is the long-established concordance among class differences that institutionalizes a structural relation. Here, I call this institutionalized structural relation "sociocultural background".

As it is well known, the sociocultural perspective provides an explanation of how

human cognitions and behaviors are affected by cultural background. Thus, as an institutionalized structural relation, such as sociocultural background, shapes the way in which humans behave through two conditions: the class condition and the social condition. This happens to correspond to Bourdieu's formula to account for practice. According to Bourdieu's theory, the former condition refers to a human's status position that implies the volume of capital he or she possesses, and the latter is the hierarchical structure (e.g. Bourdieu, 1989, 1989). Understanding by the logic of symbolic domination, sociocultural background, then, becomes the synthesis of symbolic relations at both meso and macro levels. Firstly, a class condition has to be expressed by the possession of symbolic capital. Then, through the distribution of symbolic capital, an entire symbolic world is organized to define the logic of class differences. Human status positions have been symbolically retranslated as symbolic lifestyle, which identifies class habitus as a result of the homogeneity of symbolic conditions (Bourdieu, 1990b; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013).

Habitus is an unconscious expression of a distinct class culture. The habitus of different classes is organized in a structural system, to perform a meaningful abstraction that is called "practice" by Bourdieu. Habitus, is the source of the logic of practice, but rather than practice itself. Thus, habitus cannot be seen as a practice system but rather a practice mode. Generated by habitus, practice mode follows a practical logic, and only through this can we contrast Bourdieu's practice theory with the Lévi-Straussian model of logical logic that reduces human actions to structure (Lau, 2004). Furthermore, practical logic associates practice with a phenominoncal-premise, which adds subjectivity to Lévi-Strauss' description of human actions. Such subjectivity enables human agencies to act with a sense of the game to adapt towards the social field where they live. Like what Lau (2004) summarized in his article, Bourdieu's practice is an interest-pursing strategy without conscious deliberation, and this strategy, essentially, is in pursuit of *illusio* in specific fields-games.

A practice system is composed of a series of class habitus that has to be appropriate to a given institutionalized social structure, otherwise, it won't be socially meaningful. Such practice systems, in this dissertation, are what I call "socioculture". In short, as an abstract concept, socioculture can be understood as a set of appropriate values

and actions in a specific structure. Similarly, in the work of Jodhka et al. (2017), socioculture is regarded as a synthesis of an entire structure, culture and practice, which also reminds us that it is unwise to discuss socioculture and its functions without structural context. Likewise, a structural relation that is constructed through the distribution of symbolic capital denotes a socioculture, as it represents an internalized practice system. Particularly, due to the symbolic violence among classes, each class habitus maintains domination through everyday practice, which provides socioculture symbolically discriminatory meanings. In addition to the gender dominance in a male dominating society, racism is another socioculture in a racially segregated society.

3.4.2 From Reproduction to Legitimation

Then, how socioculture legitimizes inequality? Legitimation signifies a characteristic that domination is viewed as right and proper, by both privileged groups and disadvantaged groups. As a belief of being legitimized, legitimacy of inequality is achieved through a human psychological property of social hierarchy, the belief in domination. When legitimacy is possessed, it leads people to obey social rules and arrangements voluntarily (Tyler, 2006a). Without the belief in domination, it is impossible to seek the legitimacy of inequality. As a technical term that has been widely applied to the domain of public administration, legitimacy emphasizes a feeling of obligation to defer to and accept the policies and rules made by authorities (e.g., Tyler, 2006a; Hurd, 1999; Tyler, 2004). It is this psychologically voluntary deference that ensures authorities can easily exert influence and control over most others. That is to say, this feeling of "should" shapes a perception of legitimacy, which explains why inequality is legitimate.

Experts in legitimacy have generalized such feeling of ought to obey, for the most people, as internalized norms or internalized obligation (Tyler, 1997, 2006a). By this means, authorities are naturally allowed to exert an influence on most people by the use of their superior power. In the book *Why people obey the law*, Tyler set a case of people's obedience with the law, to further describe such internalized obligation. He pointed out that, in terms of the compliance with the law, the internalized obligation is a human sense of what is morally right and wrong (Tyler, 2006b). This sense, is acquired through the repeatable operation of moral norms. With regard to inequality,

likewise, its legitimacy is expected to be built on the human sense of duty that takes social hierarchy for granted. The sense, which is derived from a human desire to behave in a way that is in accord with the rules of how a social structure is organized, is habitus.

If legitimacy of inequality is understood to have relevance of a human psychological or behavioral property, then, a legitimate domination concerns human agencies that feel obliged to comply with the hierarchical arrangement rather than change or even overturn it. Bourdieu's habitus happens to correspond to this sense of obligation, because in a structural relation, each group or class has a sense of tendency to play its role. Thus, socioculture, as a practice system in a structural relation, is performed through the sense of obligations set up for each class or group. For instance, in gender structure, compared to men, women tend to feel more obligated to focus on domestic life.

As a set of internalized traits of a class, the inheritance and the transmission of habitus from one generation to the next reproduces distinctions between classes. This reproduction not only continues but also reinforces inequality, because the interior distinctions have matched with exterior distinctions (Tilly, 1998). This is quite important for connecting reproduction to legitimation. In Tilly's theory, the interior distinctions reflect the internally visible structure, and match an interior boundary with an exterior categorical pair importing earlier established understandings and relations, so that the cost of maintaining the boundary will be lowered (Tilly, 1998). In some extent, Tilly's thoughts of durable inequality are analogous to Bourdieu's reproduction, even though these two sociologists define interior boundary differently. In the book *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, Bourdieu and Passeron regarded the habitus of students as valued by both teachers and the institutional procedures in the educational field as the core reason why children from culturally wealthy backgrounds inherit their wealth (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Crossley, 2008). In this respect, indeed, matching habitus distinctions with class boundaries makes inequality and its reproduction appear to be justifiable.

With regard to domination, reproduction signifies legitimation, which mainly concerns two aspects. On one hand, the reproduction is horizontal, which denotes that

the exterior inequality is visible but justified through the habitus distinctions among groups. Bonilla-Silva (2006) provided an obvious case of "white habitus" to illustrate this reproduction. He indicated that whites first acquire the "white habitus," including taste, feelings and values from a social closure segregated from other races. Thereupon, the habitus distinctions that match with racial differences make the issue of racism or racial domination invisible. And this process of legitimation is described by Bonilla-Silva as "racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 4). On the other hand, the reproduction is vertical, which means inequality is naturalized through the inheritance of habitus from one generation to the next.

The transformation from reproduction to legitimation requires the construction of a psychological property, of which the most crucial is habitus, or precisely, the distribution of habitus. Habitus contributes to the human sense of hierarchical arrangements of social roles and obligations, which occurs through the psychological process of naturalization. As a result, human voluntary acceptance of social roles influences how individuals perform in competitions. In a meritocratic society, accordingly, human habitus signifies individual merit that is responsible for a person's achievement and class situation. Socioculture legitimizes inequality through the conversion of habitus into individual merit. It reveals a fact that humans feel natural and justifiable in accepting the outcome of merit when it is reproduced from the order of domination within a sociocultural context.

4 The Hypothetical Practice System: Socialist Socioculture in China

As a practice system in a given structure, socioculture represents the configuration of class order. In terms of the case of China, inequality under state socialism (1957-1978)[9] reveals a hypothetical practice tendency reflecting socialist characteristics. Interpreted as a practice mode within the symbolic universe, earlier socialist domination is expected to naturally mediate human practice in the same way after transformation, and becomes the structural root of the status quo of China's social stratification. This chapter, instead of focusing on the rampant modernization that shaped the sociocultural system under Mao, focuses on hierarchical structure, how that structure has been manipulated over time via political intervention, and how it has been expected to influence human dispositions after the economic reform. For a sociocultural understanding of China's inequality after transformation, this chapter specifically deals with its socialist hierarchical system by examining its historical and institutional context. It argues that the legacies of the socialist hierarchical structure after China's transformation persist as a sort of socioculture that denotes specific practice norms. Known as habitus traits, practice norms are presumed to unequally distributed along with the legacies of socialist hierarchies. The continuance of these practice norms with socialist characteristics is thus regarded as the mechanism of reproducing social inequality within the emerging capitalist class order in China.

[9]China under state socialism specifically refers to the period from the establishment of Soviet model of socialism to the initiation of economic reform (1957-1978). The historical term "Mao era" refers to the history of People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1976, and largely coincides with China's state socialist period (see: Goodman, 2014; Walder, 2015).

4.1 Inequality in a State Socialist Society

4.1.1 State Socialism: A Political Ideology

The roots of the ideological term "socialism" can be traced back to the Latin *sociare*, which means to share or to combine. This Latin word was later replaced by *societas* to describe a legalistic idea that refers to a consensual contract between freemen in medieval law (A. Vincent, 2010). In the modern era, the word *socialisti* first made its appearance in the Italian language in Ferdinando Facchinei's book *Note e osservazioni sul libro intitolato "De Delitti e Delle Pene"* to describe the followers of Rousseau who believed in freedom and equality (de Sauvigny, 1970). Soon after, the similar-looking word *socialismo* was adopted by another Italian political philosopher Appiano Buonafede in his book *Della Restaurazione Di Ogni Filosofia Nei Secoli XVI, XVII, XVIII*, to label a system based on the notion of sociability (de Sauvigny, 1970). The modern notion of socialism as a political ideology however with systematic ideas, emerged in the early 19th-century European continent (Newman, 2005). During this period, the word *socialisme* appeared in a series of articles in French appealing to a return to socialism from individualism, to get together for social equality [10].

Etymologically, "socialism is related to social in exactly the same way that individualism is related to individual" (Parry et al., 1911, p. 359), which arranges a just social order of society through fellowship and companionship (Hoppe, 1989; A. Vincent, 2010). The term "utopian" has been used by a number of early socialists, the most famous of which include Henri Saint-Simon, Étienne Cabet, and Charles Fourier. Overall, French utopian socialism highlights a belief that it is possible to establish a harmonious, associative, and coorperative society of communal living and working (Taylor, 1982; Newman, 2005). The expectation of happiness or harmony comes from a period in which a severe dislocation of social groups in Western countries was caused by the development of capitalist industrialism (Taylor, 1982). More particular, a new working class developed out from the labour division "between different occupations, between the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, and, within manufacturing, between arti-

[10]The early 19th-century published French articles that mentions *socialisme* mainly include *Individualisme et Socialisme*, *Catholicisme et Protestantisme*, *Le Globe*, etc. (see: de Sauvigny, 1970).

sans and handicraft workers" (Taylor, 1982, p. 3). During this period of socio-economic development attained in the western countries, the traditional social values rooted in an essentially pre-industrial society lost much of their relevance, because of the emergence of the working class, whose status is either ambiguous or threatened by the results of mechanized production. The values of utopian socialism had been believed to be a reasonable response to such social problem (Taylor, 1982).

A harmonious society, in the eyes of early French utopian socialists, had to be based on perfect equality in all aspects of human life (Newman, 2005). For example, Fourier and Saint-Simon's radically denounced the oppression of women, which had a far-reaching effect on the first wave of feminism and on the establishment of equal legal and political rights for women (Goldstein, 1982; Newman, 2005). However, Fourier was convinced that the fundamental cause of human misery was not human beings themselves, but rather the current society. At the same time, he assumed that the social and economic inequality could be overcome if everybody had a basic minimum compatible with private property (Newman, 2005). This idea is a derivation of the anarchic principle of free competition, which reflects how earlier French utopian socialists had abandoned the struggle legacies of the French Revolution (Buber, 1996).

Earlier French utopian socialism presents a utopian society in both aspects of means and goal. Although they were as utopian as their French predecessors with regard to their critique of capitalism and the market system, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels proposed an opposing opinion about how a perfect society is created, emphasizing progressive and revolutionary transformation (e.g., Arnold, 1989; Weiner, 1999). In middle-late nineteenth century, the concept of "scientific socialism" was systematically put forward, as opposed to "utopian socialism." In his renowned book *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (originally published in 1880), Engels pointed out that, the rational conditions for organizing a perfect society by no means existed at the stage of industrialization, and radically denied the propositional logic of utopian socialist thoughts. What's more, in Engels's book, the solution to social problems lays hidden in undeveloped economic conditions. In other words, "the economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis" (Engels, 1999, p. 77).

Earlier than Engels, in the book *Poverty of Philosophy* (originally published in

1847), Marx stressed the effects of modes of production in economic conditions on the characters of social, political and intellectual processes of human life, and proposed the crucial concept of "relations of production" in his political economy theory. The relations of production refer to the sum total of any social relations that humans have to be involved in for their livelihood (Marx, 2008). Theoretically, in Marx's sense, social relations are bound up with productive forces, which leads humans to produce social values, ideas, and principles in accordance with their social relations (Marx, 2008). Accordingly, harmonious social relations have to be established through corresponding productive power. For Marx and Engels, the perfectly equal society pictured by their French predecessors cannot be created through a human sense of rationality and justice, but rather through revolutions. In this following book published in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx further emphasized that the relations of production always correspond to a given developmental stage of productive forces and the definite relations of production which men inevitably enter into are independent of the will of men. It is the relations of production that provide the real foundation for the economic structure of a society. According to Marx, "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness" (Marx, 1904, p.11-12).

When socialism is understood in the extended way of a practical system of political economy, Marx's theory of surplus value matters. Through his theory, Marx discussed and condemned the relations of production under capitalism, and this condemnation became the basis of the social relations of socialism. Marx found that in capitalist societies, capitalists accumulated surplus values by exploiting labor, for example by demanding laborers to work longer hour than agreed to without corresponding payment (Schumpeter, 2010). The exploitation of workers suggests the nature of the relations of production in capitalist society: due to a scarcity of the means of production that is used to produce goods, those who own the means of production seek profits by demanding workers to produce more commodities (Hoppe, 1989; Newman, 2005). In Marx's anti-capitalist thinking, harmonious relations of production or social relations can be built only when workers take over the means of production, distribution, and exchange via a revolutionary struggle (e.g., Bottomore, Harris, Kiernan, & Miliband,

1991).

The redistribution of the means of production is regarded as the basis of a new socioeconomic system that is opposed to capitalism. Socialism, interpreted as a product of bourgeois mentality by this time, was thus replaced by the term "communism" in the famous Marx and Engels work *The Communist Manifesto* (Schumpeter, 2010). Compared to "communism," in the same period, the use of "socialism" in readings always showed moderate for readers' understanding (Bond, 2011). Additionally, listed objects of socialist policies facilitated the emergence of a series of communist organizations in many European countries. From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, many countries (from Germany to France, from Sweden to Russia) had found their own specific definitions of socialism.

In fact, even though communist groups and parties increased during this time, socialists in most Europeans countries were not completely tinged with Marxism, except for Russia whose rebuilt system was purely Marxist-institutionalized (Hoppe, 1989; Schumpeter, 2010; Hoffmann, 2011). Schumpeter (2010) justified these differences in his book. Tsarist Russia was different from other European capitalist societies, being a traditional agrarian country with very a limited industrial proletariat, and commercial and industrial bourgeoise. However, these groups are supposed to be the main forces in revolution for controlling the scarce means of production. Thus Russia was faced with an awkward situation after the success of the Bolshevik-led revolution, related to how to apply the value of socialism to developing a form of economic planning. Practically, the Bolshevik party had to conduct central planning to redistribute the means of production as a way to establish socialism in Russia, even if that way was to utilize state power to aggressively, which had never been advocated for by the followers of orthodox Marxism (Screpanti & Zamagni, 2005). This state-oriented redistribution associated with Russian socialism is called "state socialism" (Lane, 2013, p. 27), and became a dominant socialist practice mode in the twentieth century with the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereafter referred to as the Soviet Union, or the USSR) (e.g., Hoppe, 1989; Van der Pijl, 1993; Lane, 2013). It is worth noting that, in addition to the state owning and planning system, the term "state socialism" was earlier used to refer to a comprehensive list of Marxist doctrine-based social wel-

fare polices proposed by Otto Bismarck in Germany in mid-late nineteenth century (e.g., Rothfels, 1938). The adoption of state socialism to designate a socialist model of central planning and a one-party system began with the establishment of the Soviet Union.

State socialism, is grounded on, but not equal to Marx's socialist thoughts of the redistribution of the means of production. As an ideology, its adoption and prominence began with the transformation of the Bolshevik party into an organization of advocating state control in mid-1920s (Van der Pijl, 1993). The values of the Bolsheviks, which included state ownership, a central-planned economy and the leading role of the Communist Party, are now the principles that define what we call state socialism (Gregory, 2004). As a technical term, state socialism sometimes is used interchangeably with Stalinism or Stalinist political logics, in reference to the central planning system implemented in his time (e.g., Nee & Lian, 1994; Poulantzas, 2000). However, this ideology is not only associated with the USSR, but represents any system of indirect central party rule and flexible centralized power, as with Hungarian model (Csanádi, 1997).

Usually and acceptably, state socialism practice has been depicted as a set of institutionalized policies in which the allocation of resources should be controlled over by the state (e.g., Hoppe, 1989; Nee & Lian, 1994; Poulantzas, 2000). In other words, under state socialism, it is the bureaucratic organizations rather than the market that play a decisive role in determining how the means of production are distributed. The state bureaucracy is almost completely bound up with the hegemonic role of the Party, because the institutional design of state socialism is aimed at making the state heavily dependent upon the Party to ensure the execution of socialist ideology. As a result, a communist society is legitimized by a party-state system, because party and state are closely intertwined, and act through a singular identity. Decisions made by the state apparatus have to be reviewed by organizations controlled by the Party (Csanádi, 1997; Bunce, 1999). Taking an obvious example of China during the Mao era (1949-1976), all the key policy decisions were made outside the administrative government but entirely monopolized by the Chinese Communist Party (S. Guo, 2001). In the period spanning the establishment of the USSR to its fall in the early 1990s, the state socialism model

was successively employed by a number of countries, including central and eastern European countries, People's Republic of China, Republic of Cuba, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and so forth.

Concerning socialist economies, the central-planned economy operation employs "redistribution" to replace the general "market" principle (I. Szelényi, 1978). Nevertheless, the state's political space has been neglected in Marxism, but rather arised in earlier German social democracy ideology as an effective and independent entity of justice and achievements of socialism (Berlau, 1970; Poulantzas, 2000). The neglect to examine the role of the state, according to Poulantzas, does creates a poor reflection of Marx's ideas of socialism and the ownership of the means of production. He wrote that, "as long as Marxism neglected the state, it was guilty of economism; and when it speaks of the state, it can only have fallen into statism" (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 35). Poulantzas's summery, to some extent, reveals the dilemma of the operation of state socialism. On one hand, such centralization initially appeared to work in many countries of Eastern Bloc, during two decades after the end of World War II. From the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, numerous state socialist countries, such as Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic (the GDR) and Hungary, quickly narrowed the gap with or even exceeded Austria, Spain, and France in the areas of life expectancy, index general industrial production, university enrollment and more (see: I. Szelényi & Szelényi, 1994). On the other hand, the model of state socialism defines power as identifiable with or reducible to the state, which inevitably leads to the state intervening excessively within domestic structures rather than to respect the autonomy of society and the economy (Poulantzas, 2000; Kaminski, 2014). A typical example would be the the Soviet famine of 1932-1933 that was resulted from the excessive collectivization of agricultural sector. It is this characteristic that has been blamed as the main reason for the failure of the practice of state socialism. Up to the current date, the capitalist market has been introduced and adopted by increasing former state socialist countries as a way to transform to a mixed form of socioeconomic system. Strictly speaking, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains the last system of true state socialism.

4.1.2 Class System in State Socialist Society

For socialism to truly be achieved, inequality ought to be eliminated. If this is supposed to be the case, can a state socialist society be viewed as having inequality or a class system? If it can, how is inequality shaped within a state socialist system? Answers to these two questions are fundamental to understand the structure of state socialist society and its relevant practice system.

Under state socialism, the concept of class has been basically transformed from its original description in the capitalist context. In turning attention to class system in a state socialist society, one should not forget how class is conceptualized for traditional capitalist societies. The entry of *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* provides a quick but clear description of the concept of class in stating that it refers to "a stratification system that divides a society into a hierarchy of social positions" (Vitt, 2007, p. 533). This widely-accepted definition directs class to a broad meaning of hierarchical system or inequality. Essentially, class is a concept of capitalist society, as it concerns how resources are distributed in socioeconomic activities. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and his associate Engels revealed the nature of class relationships in capitalist society as rife with antagonism or conflict (Marx & Engels, 2007). This antagonism is aroused due to the unequal ownership of the means of production. In Marxist theory, capitalist society is divided into two main conflicting classes: the bourgeoisies who own the means of production, and the proletariat who sell their labor power to the owners of productive property (Vitt, 2007). The Marxist model of productive relationships radically indicates that class emerges from differential access to the means of production (e.g., Marx, 1904; Clark & Lipset, 1991). This class relationship is thus characterized to be an antagonistic relationship (Parkin, 1972). With regard to the opportunity structures in capitalist societies, this antagonistic relationship between social classes is perceived as a result of meritocratic competition (see also: Morley & Lugg, 2009).

Max Weber later modified Marxian class theory, focusing on the foundation of class in the control over goods and skills, especially emphasizing on status-differences and organized collective actions (Bendix, 1974; Vitt, 2007). A class position or situation according to Weber is determined by the market relation (Weber, 1946). In this sense,

the Weberian model of class appears to be more precise to picture advanced capitalist society (Vitt, 2007). To be concrete, Weberian model of class position includes three dimensions: class, status and party (or power), in which the most fundamental is class, which is assumed to be an economic condition (Weber, 1946; Liberatos, Link, & Kelsey, 1988). Contrary to Marxian class theory, status and political power are added to the analysis of stratification, even though both factors are always conditioned by economic order in a capitalist society. In Weber's theory, social status and power are shown to be of additional importance, because in addition to the possession of social resources, the ability to exercise power also affect one's chances in life. Accordingly, occupation is claimed to be a convincing criterion of relative class position, since an occupation comprehensively reflects a series of socioeconomic values in a market system (e.g., Hatt, 1950).

Theoretically, both Marxist and Weberian views of class reject the existence of class in state socialist society. Firstly, based on the orthodox Marxist view, the private ownership of the means of production no longer exists in a socialist society. Secondly, without the mechanism of market force, class as a term appears to be not suitable for describing a state socialist society. In other words, socialist society is declared to be classless (Parkin, 1972). However, even if without market power and private economy, with the establishment of the redistributive principle, an emerging model of stratification in state socialist society was developed through the exercise of state power (Walder, 1992). Walder (1992) cited the original text in *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification*, to claim the inequality under state socialism as a process in which "the distribution of rewards in a society is a function of the distribution of power" (Lenski, 1966, p. 63). Lenski's work revealed a phenomenon that a redistribution is designed to ensure the administrative power's control over the social structure (see also: I. Szelényi, 1978; Walder, 1992). Just as in capitalist societies, inequality systems in state socialist societies are reflected in almost every aspects, including housing, education, career promotion and so forth (e.g., S. Szelényi, 1987; Bodnár & Böröcz, 1998). The distinction is that the basic structure of inequality under state socialism is not a result of autonomous market relations, but rather of redistributive mechanisms (I. Szelényi, 1978; Nee, 1989). Walder wrote, "power is seen as a class phenomenon"

(Walder, 1992, p.524).

Under the principle of socialist systems, egalitarianism tries to erase the differences of talent and ability among persons that can be the basis for legitimate inequality (So, 2003; Scheffler, 2003). Given that, redistribution is justified and developed as an effective tool to organize social structure in a socialist society. As an instrument of macro-control, redistribution is not exclusive to socialist society but rather common as socioeconomic mechanism in capitalist society, since the concept of redistribution is morally attached to a vision of social justice (Honneth, 2001). For instance, in a free market, taxation, monetary policies and welfare are the universal means employed by administrations to reduce the autonomy of distributive inequality or of poverty (e.g., Scott, 2014). Unlike those modern market economies, the redistribution implemented by state socialist countries directly collects and distributes goods through centralized planning (Nee, 1989). It has been noticed that, such models of redistributive economies feature the ideology of state socialism, and involve vertical relationships between redistributors (bureaucratic administrations) and producers. Usually, unlike with the horizontally mutual relationship between consumers and producers, the decisions and behavior of producers have to be consistent with the decisions of bureaucratic administrations. In state socialist countries, this vertical relationship is built through state and collective ownership.

The significance of redistributive power is not exclusive to centralized states. In decentralized states, central redistributive policies are usually adopted to prevent political instability, economic inefficiency and social inequality (e.g., Wellisch & Wildasin, 1996; Treisman, 1999). However, compared to the mechanisms in state socialism that integrate the economy through institutions of central planning, these redistributive polices primarily concern fiscal and monetary policies, and the allocation of public goods, to stabilize macroeconomics (Treisman, 1999). That is to say, for a market society, the formation mechanism of the social structure cannot be affected by redistributive power, since the fundamental relations of production won't be changed by such redistributive policies. This difference further reminds us to distinguish the inequality system under state socialism from general capitalist societies. Non-antagonistic strata is a precise term that emphasizes on the nature of the class system in socialist societies

(Parkin, 1972; J. Zhang, 2004). Due to central planning, different social groups share a similar status with respect to the means of production, even though material and social differences do exist among these groups. Summarized by Parkin, "the 'vertical' distribution of rewards does not produce a 'horizontal' clustering of positions which is a characteristic feature of class structure" (Parkin, 1972, p.138).

The central role of state power as stratifying mechanism characterizes the social structure in state socialist societies as an organized hierarchical order, rather than a form of autonomous stratification (e.g., Parkin, 1972; Walder, 1992; Zhou, Tuma, & Moen, 1996). Monopolized by central redistributors, social benefits are not associated with market position but rather with the power position. Fundamentally, the endorsement of state power justifies the positional power of a social group or class, which organizes hierarchical structure in state socialist societies. In particular, on one hand, the social structure is basically introduced by redistributive power, with a diminished place for market force and increased effectiveness of bureaucratized social relations (I. Szelényi, 1978; Kraus, 1981). On the other hand, the relations between social organizations and state power are hierarchically ordered in terms of property rights, which corresponds to Marxist test of the ownership of the means of production and causes inequalities among organizations with regard to access to privileges and benefits (N. Lin & Bian, 1991; Zhou et al., 1996).

4.2 Inequality under State Socialism (1957-1978): The Case of China

Before the initiation of the reform and opening up in the late 1970s, social structure in state socialist China was organized through a redistributive hierarchy. In state socialist regimes, redistributive hierarchies essentially reveal the allocation of political status (Walder, Li, & Treiman, 2000). Although the distributive principle of egalitarianism weakens the horizontally mutual interaction between customers and producers, control over resources leads bureaucratic power to completely decide how these resources and life chances are hierarchically arranged in accordance with political status. The following subsections detail the hierarchical order of the state socialist society in China. These hierarchies not only explain the ideologically political loyalty to the given sys-

tem, but also suggest China's movement toward modernization. Known as a socialist sociocultural system, this series of hierarchical arrangements express the naturalized configuration of social structure during the period of state socialism.

4.2.1 Class as Caste

Class designations everywhere highlight difference and inequality in state socialist China. The application of class designations that name the strata in Chinese society have been consistent with China's revolutionarily political correctness, since class struggle continued after the establishment of socialism to keep the whole party system from being infiltrated by capitalist ideology (e.g., Kraus, 1977; Goodman, 2014; Walder, 2015). The period in China, from the establishment of state socialism to the initiation of transformation, thus, has been found to some extent to be a continuation of the social structures as it existed before the liberation. The term "class" in a socialist context refers to a hierarchical construction that comes from the CCP's Marx-Leninist ideology rather than more general strata or stratum. Instead of being used in generalizing "middle class" or "laboring class" in market-oriented society, class is employed to describe workers, peasants, bourgeois and capitalists in a socialist social context. Such an understanding of class was abolished after China's economic reform, and the more general interpretation has been universally adopted to describe China's social structure since 2002 (Goodman, 2014).

Understood in terms of the CCP's ideological basis of both the social relations of production and political consciousness, class status virtually denotes an identity that reveals an individual's political position. During the state socialism of Mao, class was emphasized as inherited social honor, but without static patterns (Kraus, 1981). In particular, class was seen as a dynamic conception grounded on Mao's inconstant understanding of class consciousness. For instance, the intellectual group was officially identified as an enemy class after they criticized the Party. In this sense, the class-as-caste model in state socialist China does make an emphasis on the biological inheritability of identity, but also relinquishes the consistency of the corresponding political status of a class identity. Similar to almost all other state socialist countries, through a structural arrangement of binary opposition, China's social structure was

transformed into an organic organization of political objectives and was further translated into a concrete political programme during the Mao era (Wood, 1998). Briefly speaking, class designation in Chinese society is in a process of politicization. Class struggle obviously explains how a politicized class structure serves the purity and the stability of a political system. It has also been stressed that, when the state power is able to exert its willingness to intervene in society, society inevitably "comes to be organized and run along bureaucratic lines" (M. M.-h. Yang, 1988, p.413-414).

Strictly, the socialist class system seen entirely in terms of political consciousness and socio-economic conditions, existed in China from 1957 to 1976 (Goodman, 2014). The persistence of class divisions and class struggle throughout the socialist era was Mao's justification for the establishment and the preservation of socialist system (G. Young, 1986; Healy, 2008). During that time, class status came to be partly ordered in terms of Mao's changing interpretation of the political correctness of a class group (Goodman, 2014), which led class relationships to be historically specific. Given that, it is proper to analyze China's socialist class system in a historically sequential order. Overall, speaking to what scholars universally conveyed, it is CCP's ideological formulation embodied in the relationship between an adult's position in the production process and political consciousness that shapes China's class order under state socialism (Kraus, 1981; Goodman, 2014). Such class structure denotes political hierarchy through attaching privileged class labels and discriminating class labels toward various groups.

From 1958 to 1961, after the socialist reconstruction of society, China entered into the Great Leap Forward (the GLP). This period is called "Mao's crusade" by historians, since Mao mobilized every Chinese citizen to transform the whole country, and was blindly confident that economic development and social transformation could be rapidly achieved through boosting production (A. L. Chan, 2001, p. 15). Increasingly unrealistic goals and slogans were proposed, such as "catching up with and overtaking the UK in 15 years." During this time, agricultural and industrial sectors developed in parallel under Mao. The agricultural collectivization and leap encouraged farmers to engage in agricultural production and was successful in the very initial stage of the GLF. Nevertheless, the ignorance of nature and socioeconomic law brought about a se-

ries of mistakes in production plans and misallocation of resources, which led to a 15% decline in grain output in 1959. The problems that came with this decline were further compounded by the 14.7 % increased state compulsory grain procurement quota in that year (J. Y. Lin, 1990). This vicious circle caused successive agricultural crises and finally led to the fierce famine that swept large parts of rural China from 1959 to 1961 (J. Y. Lin, 1990; Kung & Lin, 2003; Thaxton, 2008). On industrialization, the prominent movement concerned Mao's tremendous emphasis on steel production. Historical data shows that, like the situation of grain output, there was a temporary surge in steel and iron output from 1958 to 1959. However, the steel and iron output drastically decreased from 62.6 to 31 (10,000 tons) between 1960 and 1961 (W. Li & Yang, 2005). Meanwhile, preoccupied with iron and steel manufacturing, commune authorities had to, to some extent, neglect the agricultural production. Thus the economic costs of the GLF were huge. For example, a large amount of steel produced was of poor quality and was considered wasted (Kung & Lin, 2003). Viewed from a historical perspective, dominated by extreme Leftism, the Great Leap Forward brought the newly established China to a political and socioeconomic disaster (see: Joseph, 1986; W. Li & Yang, 2005; Kung & Chen, 2011).

The ideological foundation behind this radical movement was the Marxist doctrine that class contradictions are the motive force of socioeconomic development. "Red and experts" that emphasized the significance of political consciousness (red) and technicians (experts) had become the politico-ideological foundation of the GLF since 1957 (Baum, 1964). Based on this, and in concert with the goals of the GLF, two "exploiting classes" and two "laboring classes"[11] were identified by Mao to construct a new class structure (Goodman, 2014). The laboring classes were workers and peasants, while the first exploiting class included "imperialism, feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, the remnants of the Nationalist Party" and "the 300,000 Rightists and their agents," and the second included bourgeoisies. It is worth noting that, due to the nationwide land revolution movement, landlords and rich peasants social classes in China had been put to end (P. C. Huang, 1995), which gave rise to a stable rural class system including

[11]The laboring class here doesn't refer to the working class in market society, but rather to be used to describe a class opposite to the "exploiting class."

hired agricultural worker, poor peasant and middle peasant.

Table 2: Class system during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961)

Exploiting Classes	**Laboring Classes**	
Imperialism, feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, remnants of the Nationalist Party, the 300,000 Rightists and their agents	Workers	
Bourgeoisies	Peasants	Hired agricultural workers
		Poor peasants
		Middle peasants

Source: (Kraus, 1981)

After the abandonment of the GLF, China's class structure was initiated to transform the remnants of the old elite classes from the former society to the emerging classes arising within the socialist society (G. Young, 1986; Goodman, 2014). Simultaneously, the concept of the "new elements of bourgeoisie" mainly referring to the Rightists and their supporters was proposed by Mao, as the ideological foundation of this group was believed to signify a warning of the danger of socialist revolution. However, Mao's remark of this new class group was not in accordance with the ownership implication of the orthodox conception of socialist revolution. Young continued to stress that, virtually, Mao's new interpretation of class struggle equated socialism to "a society transition between capitalism and communism" (G. Young, 1986, p. 47), rather than to a distinct economic base. Mao insisted that, the CCP and the socialist system must take a stand for the interests of the proletariat. Those of bourgeoisie or non-proletariat class designation, thus, were discriminated against for their ideology that didn't represent the proletariat (Healy, 2008). Mao stated in the early of 1960s that the class struggle gave rise to the socialist transition specifically and ideologically occurred between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and was by no means over (Healy, 2008).

In order to prevent the newly established system from being restored to capitalism, the radical class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie developed into the Cultural Revolution in the superstructure. During the Cultural Revolution

(1966-1976), class struggle had completely become an ideological apparatus to ensure pure proletarian culture and institutions of Chinese society were retained (e.g., Kraus, 1981; G. Young, 1986). The Cultural Revolution was aimed at political alignment, which transformed the ideological foundation of Chinese society by mobilizing the masses (Feng, 2011). One of the primary motives of a thorough ideology struggle for Mao was to ensure that China would never change within the political and ideological superstructure (e.g., Walder, 2015). Due to the emphasis on ideologically political correctness, the status and the privileges of the "red class" were strongly promoted (Gao, 1987; Andreas, 2009). Correspondingly, those of the non-red or non-proletariat class were discriminated against. Although Mao stressed that family background was neither to be ignored nor to be the dominant consideration in evaluating an individual, it regained new prominence during the Cultural Revolution, which convincingly characterized China's class categorization as a caste system (Kraus, 1981; H. Zheng & Hong, 1996). Based on family background and socioeconomic conditions, individuals were categorized into a class system consisting of the "Red," the "Black," and the "In-between" in the Cultural Revolution (see: Table 3). People who belonged to red categories enjoyed privileges of education, material distribution and promotion over the other two classes. For instance, it was not allowed for the students who were born into the black and in-between classes to join the Red Guard (Gao, 1987).

Viewed as an extreme class struggle situation, the Cultural Revolution caused a large amount of loss and isolation, both real and symbolic, suffered by countless victims, and was officially defined as the "ten years of chaos" (X. Lu, 2004, p. 152). With the end of the Cultural Revolution, the CCP made a decision to remove the negatively discriminating class label from the families of the former exploiting classes on January 29th, 1979 (Goodman, 2014). Although class structure in the form of a caste system no longer officially exists in Chinese society, the privileged class labels have remained in other symbolic forms.

4.2.2 The Privileges of Communist Party Membership

As a one party ruling country under state socialism, party administrators are given a monopolizing authority over redistribution. The Communist Party, can thus viewed as

Table 3: Class system during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

The Red Class	The In-Between Class	The Black Class
Worker, Poor and lower-middle peasant, Revolutionary solider, Revolutionary cadre, Revolutionary martyr	Middle and Upper-middle peasant, Pretty proprietor, Intellectual	Landlord, Rich peasant, Counter-revolutionary, Bad element, Rightist, Traitor, Spy

the core pillar of the political order. In addition to the above mentioned red classes, Party membership absolutely reflected an individual's political correctness, and his/her political loyalty to the socialist system. In this sense, for the central administration, a series of corresponding privileges came as rewards for the loyalty of Party members (Walder, 1995). All socialist states using the Soviet-Union model in the 20th century took Party membership in political and social hierarchy as primary. Redistributors who come to be symbolized as privileged party elites are the the primary beneficiaries of the state socialist system, which works through *Nomenklatura* (e.g., Walder, 1995; Kryshtanovskaya & White, 1996; Kung & Chen, 2011). This Communist Party leadership management system originated with the USSR. "Nomenklatura" technically refers to "a list of positions, arranged in order of seniority, including a description of the duties of each office" (Harasymiw, 1969, p.494). The "Nomenklatura" suggests an elite class or a ruling class that is highly positioned within a communist political hierarchy (see also: Volensky, 1984; Kryshtanovskaya & White, 1996). Under state socialism, China's nomenklatura covers the highest authorities whose political power is highly concentrated. This include the full and alternative members of the Central Committee of China's Communist Party who control the senior official positions in the Party, the military, the government and the public organizations (Kung & Chen, 2011). Given the Party's monopoly position, in the context of a centrally planned economy, these political elites listed in Nomenklatura act as redistributors in making ruling decisions.

In addition to the ruling status of party elites, additional privileges of Party members under contemporary state socialism have long been recognized. As rewards for political loyalty and reliability, Communist Party members universally enjoy priorities

and benefits in schooling, housing, food, and consumer goods quotas (I. Szelényi, 1976, 1983; Gerber, 2000). S. Szelényi (1987) examined socialist Hungary and demonstrated how Communist Party[12] membership was significantly associated with social inequality, which was particularly reflected in one's likelihood of career promotion. Through investigating the archive data, she found that the Party members were mainly overrepresented in more advanced managerial, professional, and skilled manual occupations, and were more likely to be found in supervisory and decision-making positions of organizations.

The same situation occurs in China. Communist Party members are a select class of contributors that establish and maintain the communist political and social order (Walder, 1995; Bian, Shu, & Logan, 2001). In this sense, Party member recruitment is virtually a form of political screening. Throughout the whole Maoist era, Communist Party member recruitment explicitly favored the "red" class people who were politically reliable, such as peasants and workers (B. Li & Walder, 2001; Bian et al., 2001). However, the specific criterion of Party member recruitment has evolved over time, to reflect the CCP's dynamic understanding of modernization and social convergence. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, in addition to those politically loyal classes, a growing urban youth population became a primary source of new Party membership supply, because urban powerless mess, especially young students were mobilized by Mao to rebel and grab power from elite bureaucrats (Bian et al., 2001). Moreover, it was also found that advanced urban worker, red experts and pioneers in technology were welcomed to join the Communist Party during this period (H. Y. Lee, 1991; Andreas, 2009). Yet, the role of education in Party member recruitment should not be overstated because, without political loyalty, education alone couldn't facilitate one's chances of being a Communist Party member (Bian et al., 2001). Entering into the decade of the Cultural Revolution and very shortly thereafter, "political screening in party and elite recruitment was intensified" (Bian et al., 2001, p. 811). For example, individuals who were categorized into the "black class" were strictly prevented from joining the Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution. At the same time, since intellectuals

[12]In Hungary, the Communist Party was established as the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (*Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt*, or MSZMP (see: S. Szelényi, 1987).

were seen as a suspicious social class, educational credentials in many ways became an obstacle to the attainment of Party membership (Parish, 1984; Bian et al., 2001).

Apart from the returns in the allocation of housing, health care, job, and scarce customer goods, until the post-Mao reforms, earning Party membership was being nearly the sole means of career mobility in urban China (Dickson & Rublee, 2000). Statistically, being a Party member sufficiently increased one's chances of becoming an elite cadre in urban China, not only in the Mao era, but also in the early reform period (B. Li & Walder, 2001). Furthermore, during the Maoist period, time of joining the Party also affected the career consequence: an individual who attained Party membership in the very beginning of his or her career, were carried out to be 6.5 times more likely to become a cadre than a non-Party member (B. Li & Walder, 2001).

4.2.3 Household Registration System

The contemporary household registration system (in Chinese: *hukou* system) has been universally recognized as another caste system in socialist China which divides and organizes people based on locational and family-membership differentiation (e.g., F.-L. Wang, 2005; Tang & Yang, 2008). Initiated as a component of the establishment of the socialist system and central panning economy, China's contemporary *hukou* system is designed to restore stability and to implement the central government's plan for prioritized industrialization by defining the city-countryside relationship and shaping state-society relations (T. Cheng & Selden, 1994; J. Young, 2013). Throughout the period of People's Republic of China, specifically from the establishment of the socialist system to the present, the *hukou* system still enjoys "considerable institutional legitimacy and administrative effectiveness" (F.-L. Wang, 2005, p. 32).

Criticized for its generations of discrimination and inequality, yet, the PRC household registration system originally dates back to ancient China. A population census and household registration had been came into being during the Xia Dynasty (21st-16th century B.C.) and developed during the subsequent Shang Dynasty (16th-11th century B.C.). Scholars found that a primitive form of *hukou*-like system was created in the Western Zhou Dynasty (11th-8th century B.C.). Known as *xiangsui* system, this early *hukou*-like system divided residential and rural areas into hierarchically different

zones, and managed populations based on clan structures, annually recording household registration for taxation (F.-L. Wang, 2005; J. Young, 2013). Another pre-modern form of *hukou* system is called collectively *baojia* system that was officially initiated in the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) and was in place throughout China's feudal period. *Baojia* was a system imposed by Load Shang Yang to organize families into units responsible for their activities to the state, and to expand the taxation base and control society (J. Young, 2013). Essentially, *baojia* is the use of the art of war, which denotes the application of a military management system for social control (Dutton, 1988). Strictly speaking, *baojia* had not been institutionalized as an effective organizational form of household management until the Song Dynasty (960-1279). The system during the Song Dynasty used lower level social unites to construct the hierarchical relations of power and obligations, which officially integrated family household (in Chinese: *hu*) into social organizations (Dutton, 1988). Ten family households were categorized into one unit *jia*, and one unit, *bao*, was composed of ten *jia*. This hierarchically organizational model had also been to some extent adopted by government of the Republic of China, and was later abolished along with the establishment of the PRC.

The subsequent Chinese dynasties basically adopted this household-based registration system, but still made some adjustments to the changing situations. For instance, the *hukou* system in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) registered people not only based on their living locations, but also on their professions (F.-L. Wang, 2005). In the last Chinese dynasty, the Qing (1632-1912), due to increasing social upheavals, civil wars and foreign invasions, the *hukou* system was fully utilized by the centralized power to maintain social stability and to limit people's migration, which characterized the system as an efficient tool to control the population, or to protect good people and restrict bad people (F.-L. Wang, 2004; J. Young, 2013).

The PRC household registration system, *hukou* system, evolved gradually with the success of the communist revolution and the establishment of the state socialist system in mainland China. Although the function was partly inherited from ancient China, the PRC *hukou* system is utilized for its own mission to control the domestic migration and manages temporary residents and targeted peoples (F.-L. Wang, 2005). Additionally, in the beginning, the newly-established PRC government employed the

hukou system to consolidate the socialist system and public interests, because China was faced with an agrarian economy scarce in capital and it therefore had to adopt the Soviet-Union model in order to formulate an adequate industrialization-oriented development strategy. This made the control of population migration appear to be both necessary and reasonable (K. W. Chan & Zhang, 1999). This system, in its restrictions of domestic population movement, has been found to be, to some extent, analogous to the Soviet *propiska* (internal passport) that concerned the permission of residence and migration within the USSR (e.g., Dutton, 1992; Torpey, 1997; Kuang & Li, 2012). PRC *hukou* system particularly emphasizes the priority of the urban-industrial sector. Consequently, an urban-rural dual social and economic configuration is shaped and maintained (T. Cheng & Selden, 1994; K. W. Chan & Zhang, 1999). China's *hukou* system creates a spatial hierarchy of urban areas and prioritizes the city over the countryside. Not only that, during most time of Maoist period, population movement up and down were both spatially controlled, which denoted that the migration of both urban and rural residents from their birth place was limited (T. Cheng & Selden, 1994).

During the Maoist era, the socialist *hukou* system was featured by the *Regulation on Household (Hukou) Registration of the People's Republic of China* issued in 1958 and a series of relevant regulations, proclamations and influential official speeches before the occurrence of 1958 regulation. This early socialist system of *hukou* management not only made an evident urban-rural division, but also controlled migration and settlement between city and countryside, and strictly associated an individual's *hukou* status to his/her rights and privileges (J. Young, 2013). Meanwhile, the 1958 regulation only allowed citizens' conditional domestic migration. For example, a citizen's migration from countryside to city had to be justified by the conditions of either being admitted by a school or an urban work unit, or being permitted by the local Ministry of Public Security [13]. In this case, throughout the collective Mao era, China's rural population was almost restricted to a subaltern position on land and had no chances to leave (T. Cheng & Selden, 1994). According to the PRC *hukou* system, legally, every citizen has to be registered with a *hukou* certificate, even today. This certificate includes two related parts: one is residential location based on an individual's one presumed

[13] See: *Regulation on Household (Hukou) Registration of the People's Republic of China*, Article 10.

regular residence and, one is household registration status (or *hukou* status), which refers to agricultural or non-agricultural *hukou* status (see: K. W. Chan & Zhang, 1999). The latter is closely tied up to a citizen's socioeconomic eligibility, and builds the configuration of China's contemporary urban-rural dualism. This study specifically focuses on the latter *hukou* status and its influences on human practice and inequality. Before the reform, the *hukou* status determined an individual's socioeconomic benefits, which basically ruled out the countryside from the state-supplied system, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. Compared to the holders of agricultural *hukou* status who were expected to be largely self-sufficient and very limitedly benefited from the state supplements, during this period, citizens who were designed of non-agricultural *hukou* status would be entitled to commodity grain, state-provided housing, schooling, and other social welfare benefits, and more likely to get upward mobility (see: T. Cheng & Selden, 1994; J. Zhang, 2004; F.-L. Wang, 2005; K. W. Chan & Buckingham, 2008; J. Young, 2013). Table 4 shows a series of socioeconomic divisions upon *hukou* status prior to economic reform.

4.2.4 Occupational Structure

In modern industrialized countries, occupational prestige is viewed as a measure of socioeconomic achievement, which could be said to dated back to a study called *Jobs and Occupations: A Popular Evaluation*, carried out by Cecil North and Pual Hatt in 1947 (e.g., N. Lin & Xie, 1988; Nakao & Treas, 1994). After its publication, increasing investigations were increasingly made to update the evolving occupational characteristics and classifications that accordingly influenced the occupational socioeconomic status and prestige hierarchies (e.g., Hodge, Siegel, & Rossi, 1964; Treiman, 1977; Stevens & Hoisington, 1987). Prestige rank among occupational groupings is now thought to share similarities across capitalist societies. Due to the spread of the Western mode of industrial organization in the 20th century, many scholars universally believe that, a Western pattern of division of labor has been adopted by a number of countries, which basically accounts for the fundamental similarity of occupational hierarchy throughout the world (Treiman, 1977; N. Lin & Xie, 1988).

From the establishment of the state socialist system to the initiation of economic

Table 4: Divisions upon *hukou* status (1958-1978)

Institutionalized Rights and Privileges	**Non-Agricultural *Hukou***	**Agricultural *Hukou***
Food and Customer Goods Quota	State-supplied and ratio card system.	Self-sufficient food except during disasters.
Education	State-run education, relatively high quality.	Rural people use their own resource to invest education, relatively low quality.
Housing	State allocated or subsidized housing.	Self-constructed houses.
Employment	Arranged by urban labor bureaus with some choices for urban youth.	Employment in rural communes or agricultural production work in the area of their registration. Some might be hired by state employers to work in hard or heavy jobs.
Social Welfare	Free or subsidized medical care, retirement benefits and labour insurance.	The "cooperative medical system" built upon rural communes took responsibility of medical and aged care.

Source: T. Cheng and Selden (1994), F.-L. Wang (2005), and J. Young (2013).

reforms, China's occupational structure was largely built on the Soviet Model of social and economic organizations, which are relatively distinct from the Western pattern (N. Lin & Xie, 1988). Nevertheless, it has been found that it is the level of industrialization, rather than the political system per say that informs how occupational hierarchies are addressed. For instance, scholars completed an investigation in the 1950s, to make a statistical comparisons of occupational prestige at the national-level (Inkeles & Rossi, 1956). In this study, the USSR was added as a case together with other five industrialized countries: the United States, Great Britain, Japan, New Zealand and Germany. The occupational ratings in these six modern industrialized countries revealed an unexpectedly high level of conformity, despite the variance between sociocultural settings and political systems.

China's socialist occupational rank was specifically advanced by the CCP as a system of social stratification to categorize people, particularly during the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution (Kraus, 1981; Bian, 1996). Theoretically, the universal notion of occupational hierarchy is not compatible with either the early Maoist image of socialist equality or the later Maoist class struggle theory, which makes it hard to systematically carry out relevant studies about this issue (Bian, 1996). It is known through a few scholarly studies that, lacking industrial patterns of division of labor, the stratification of occupational rankings in state socialist China concerns two dimensions: horizontal groupings called "sectors" (Kraus, 1981, p. 31) and the work unit hierarchy in urban areas (Zhou et al., 1996).

Sector-based Occupational Rank When the term *sector* is understood in a socialist context, the occupations are horizontally classified in line with the modes of production, which to some extent characterizes the sector-based occupational structure as a duplicate of class designation. Specifically, sectors in China are grouped into: industry, agriculture, commerce, education, military, administration, and the Party. The horizontal distinctions of occupational hierarchy were organized based on the functional role played by each occupation (Kraus, 1981). As advocated for the CCP, the status of certain occupational groups was accordingly redefined. In the first decade of the establishment of the PRC (1949-1959), the efforts in industrializing the country sufficiently increased the occupational status of the urban working class, cadres

and professionals (N. Lin & Xie, 1988). In the late 1950s, millions of intellectuals were discriminated against by the Anti-Rightists campaign, which negatively influenced the social-political status of those educated occupational groups, such as professionals, teachers, technicians, etc. (N. Lin & Xie, 1988; Bian, 1996). As the greatest upheaval since the establishment of the PRC, the Cultural Revolution drastically pulled down the status of educated occupational groups. Correspondingly, the social positions of peasants, urban workers and soldiers were significantly promoted (N. Lin & Xie, 1988). As an extension of class designation, the sector-based occupational ranking system was abolished, along with the end of class struggle campaign and the initiation of reform.

Cadre-Worker Dichotomy Horizontally, the work units or organizations are listed in descending hierarchical order in urban China as follows: the government agencies, the public organizations and the enterprises. This division further yielded the cadre-worker job categories into the official coding system (Bian, 2002). Historically, in a socialist revolutionary context, the term "cadre" refers to a sort of person who is believed to be politically correct and who takes responsibility for special political tasks. After the CCP became the ruling party, the concept of cadre included two distinct categories: "the political elite and the functionaries staffing the huge party-state apparatus" (H. Y. Lee, 1991, p. 4). The former is easily understood as those that possess high-level official positions or political power in the bureaucratic system (H. Y. Lee, 1991; Brødsgaard, 2002). The latter included other levels of the bureaucracy, such as managers and professionals (Davis, 2000; Bian, 2002). In addition to being provided the favor of material compensation packages, cadres are institutionalized to be more likely and flexibly to get promoted in their career lives than urban ordinary urban workers (Bian, 2002).

Worker Stratification Based on State-Collective Dualism Vertically, in accordance with the vertical property rights relation to the state, the urban enterprises further hierarchically descend from the state-owned enterprise to the collective enterprise(Zhou et al., 1996; A. Chan, 1997). Zhou and his colleagues explained that "the relations of organizations to the state are hierarchically ordered in terms of property rights, which causes these organizations to differ in political power, economic

benefits and prestiges" (Zhou et al., 1996, p. 761). It features China's urban economic structure as state-collective dualism that workers enjoyed the highest status in state-owned enterprise than collective sectors (Walder, 1986; N. Lin & Bian, 1991; Bian, 2002). The communist enterprise, especially the state-owned one, is not defined as an economic enterprise, but rather as a social institution (Walder, 1986). In particular, the financial performance of these enterprises is directly determined by negotiations with central planning agencies. In the mean time, a state-owned enterprise not only administers for the state its labor insurance and social security provisions, but also supplies a wide range of public goods and services. What's more, state ownership characterizes enterprises to serve as efficient political agents to blur the boundary between control over one's work life and control over one's private life. Such functions of sociopolitical control are entirely missing in the western world and Japan. Due to the sense of community shaped and reinforced by the workplace, an individual's position in urban society is significantly identified by his/her workplace (Rohlen, 1979; A. Chan, 1997).

Beyond the model of workplace family, another Maoist feature of China's work unit system is "permanent employment" (Chinese term: iron rice bowl). Since the profits of state-owned enterprises are directly bound up to the state, such employment in China boosts one's social status. Workers in state-owned enterprises who accounted for 78% of the urban labor force were provided lifelong employment by the initiation of the reform and enjoyed better insurance and social welfare benefits than urban collective workers (Walder, 1986; Bian, 2002). Temporary workers are conditionally allowed to be employed in state-owned enterprises. For these workers, most of whom are registered as agricultural *hukou* status and have had agricultural working experience for at least part of the year. Compared to those permanent-employed urban workers, temporaries are less benefited and placed in a relatively lower position in Chinese society. A very important distinction is that permanent workers are fully guaranteed pension and health care benefits, whereas most temporary workers are not (Kraus, 1981). Empirically, it has been confirmed that even if provided less insurance, social welfare and grain price subsidies than permanent workers in state sectors, permanent workers in collective sectors are still favored much better in those aspects than the

temporary workers in any sectors (Walder, 1986).

4.3 Socialist Legacies under China's Reform (1978-Present): A Socioculture

Widely perceived as successful, China's reform inevitably changed the state-society relations and the social structure. China's reform has basically become seen as an institutional shift from redistribution to market-oriented mechanisms (e.g., Nee, 1992, 1996). Consequently, a society that had become subordinate to the political order has been gradually transforming to a hierarchical arrangement more characteristic of capitalist societies, which has further altered how the public perceives inequality (Nee & Matthews, 1996; Wright, 2010). Recently, both Chinese citizens and research institutes have gotten used to adopting the criteria of the western class system to depict China's social structure. For instance, the concept of "middle class identity" that is used to describe cultured lifestyle resting upon strong economic foundations has increasingly attented in subjective identification (Wright, 2010; Miao, 2017). Likewise, the middle class concept is currently widely utilized by the renowned management consulting firm McKinsey & Company to estimate the future of China's social stratification (see: Barton et al., 2013).

Due to the persistence of redistributive power in its market system, however, China's social structure is essentially a hybrid of a socialist class system and capitalist social stratification. In general, the market allocation system definitely reduces the privileges of the redistributive bureaucracy, and increases the bargaining power of producers, including peasants (Nee, 1991; Walder, 1996). In this sense, China's capitalist transformation is a partial reform, as redistributors continue to exercise substantial control over resources and market outlets, which weakens market autonomy (Kornai, Lukács, et al., 1986; Nee, 1991). Concerning the specific case of China's transformation, as an innovative institutional form, redistribution, market, and reciprocity are in place of the market-dominant mode, which to some extent integrates the socialist class system into an emerging capitalist society (Nee, 1996). On one hand, a decline of the monopoly of bureaucracy can be expected through the market force. On the other hand, the favor of the redistributive bureaucracy is quite significant for rent seekers,

such as entrepreneurs, to access market resources and opportunities (see: Nee, 1991; Rona-Tas, 1994). This is to say that, institutionally, advantages and privileges under redistributive power would be necessarily converted to socioeconomic resources and corresponding positional advantages in market-oriented social stratification.

The hierarchies arranged by redistributive power, discussed in this section, are called socialist legacies. Persisting for over 20 years, this socialist social structure has evolved into a practice system that I call *socialist socioculture*. Socialist symbolic capital is thus the recognition of benefits from redistributive power, such as non-agricultural *hukou*, Party membership, et cetera. From a sociocultural perspective, albeit under a market-oriented system, the persistence of redistributive power makes it inevitable for human practice to be always mediated by the persisting socialist practice mode. In other word, through embodied behavioral pattern or habitus, socialist symbolic capital will be converted to other forms of capital that denote competitiveness in a meritocratic society. Thus, even with the emergence of market force and middle class, China's reform era social stratification is still hypothesized to related to the earlier social structures under state socialism. Moreover, it is this sort of reproduction that fundamentally naturalizes and legitimizes China's inequality in the reform era.

4.3.1 Transformation in China: An Overview

China's transformation, launched in the late 1970s, has turned the economy into a market reforming era, and has also altered the state-society relations (e.g., Perry, 1994; W.-W. Zhang, 2000; Wright, 2010). Economically, this transformation applies market force mainly into four main aspects: rural reform, urban reform, macroeconomic reform, and opening up (W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Due to the persistence of the socialist political system, albeit market has been introduced to China, the statist legacy has to some extent blurred the boundary between planned and market economy in the very beginning of economic reform (Solinger, 1993). Before the official establishment of the "socialist market economy" in 1992, scholars had assumed that the purpose of China's economic reform was to build a mixed economic regime characterized by both expending market dependence and continuance of redistributive power (e.g., Nee, 1991, 1992).

Concerning the legitimation of transformation, a series of political theories have been proposed for its ideological justification since China embarked upon the reform and opening. These ideological theories technically associate market elements to the CCP's monopoly of political power, and afterwards, were officially defined as "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" by the incumbent General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Zhao Ziyang in the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1987. This innovative approach is an attempt to strike a balance between a market-oriented economy and an authoritarian state to maintain the continued economic growth and one-party ruling stability in China (Zhao, 2010). In the very beginning, thus, China's reform was designed as a process of "administrative decentralization," and particularly concerned a crucial shift in how the role and the practice of government should be designed and acted upon respectively (e.g., Nee, 1992; Sigley, 2006; H. Cai & Treisman, 2006). Inspired by the efficacy of the market economy, such decentralization transfers the power to the enterprises and local governments, and is essentially a growth-oriented "soft reform" that doesn't thoroughly violate the old system (Nee, 1992; W.-W. Zhang, 2000). In the meantime, transformation in China makes "hard reform" that may cut deep into the old system gradually acceptable (W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Ranging from labor markets, housing, social welfare, and the establishment of specific economic zones and today's free-trade zones, large-scale hard reforms occur in China that appears to be structurally contradictory to the nature of socialism (e.g., Meng & Kidd, 1997; W.-W. Zhang, 2000; J. Lee & Zhu, 2006).

A series of hard reforms have led to increasing horizontal inequalities, social polarization and spatial segregation, which characterizes China's transformation as a structurally revolutionary both societally and economically. One may say that China has undergone a transfiguration turning "Maoist socialism" into "Capitalism with Chinese characteristics" (Sigley, 2006, p. 488). On one hand, the relations of production has drastically changed, followed by the proliferation of non-state actors and smash of the *iron rice bowl* (Leung, 1988; Hsueh, 2016). On the other hand, with respect to the capitalist characteristics, China has its own characteristic in the role of the state, which signifies a grabbing hand rather than a helping hand (Y. Huang, 2008).

Soft Reforms In China's transformation agenda, soft reforms come first, hard reforms second (W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Oriented by economic growth, soft reforms have introduced market competition to replace egalitarianism (W.-W. Zhang, 2000; So, 2003). Decentralization plays a key role in the introduction of market force to China's economy, and it has been indeed found to improve allocative efficiency and macroeconomic performance (Feltenstein & Iwata, 2005). In particular, decentralization in China's reform primarily concerns two dimensions: administrative decentralization and the fiscal decentralization (see also: W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Concerning the political aspect of decentralization, the autonomy of most social actors has definitely been extended. In addition to conventional socialist technologies of government, some neo-liberal strategies that govern through the desire of individuals, whether as citizens or specifically as property owners, rent seekers and consumers are integrated in China's "socialist arts of government" (Sigley, 2006, p. 491).

In terms of rural reform, administrative decentralization or decolletivisam is directly reflected in the innovation of the "household responsibility system" and "town and village enterprises" (TVEs). As a growth-oriented institutional reform, the household responsibility system allows peasants to sell agricultural products beyond the government-regulated quota in the free market (J. Y. Lin, 1987). Under this system, "the individual peasant, rather than the production team, became the basic unit for decision making in Chinese agriculture" (McMillan, Whalley, & Zhu, 1989, p.784), which facilitates the role of market in guiding agricultural production (J. Y. Lin, 1987, 1992). With the nationwide establishment of the household responsibility system in rural China, commune-based collective agriculture was officially abolished at the end of 1984. Due to the growth of market force in rural areas, agricultural workers were encouraged to specialize in various sideline productions to develop town and village enterprises (W.-W. Zhang, 2000). TVEs originally referred to firms of communal characteristics that were located in village and townships, and were thought to be another remarkable institutional innovation of rural reform (Weitzman & Xu, 1994). In the early stage of rural reform, most TVEs were collectively owned, which denoted that the property rights of TVEs were regulated to be executed collectively through the representatives of rural community and the corresponding collective benefits were in-

tegrated into the benefits of local governments (Weitzman & Xu, 1994; Pei, 1996). Following this, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Township Enterprises* issued in October 1996 allowed individual peasants to claim private ownership of TVEs [14]. On collective-owned enterprises, however, the control rights are independent from ownership, and partly delegated to managers via contracts (Weitzman & Xu, 1994). For instance, the TVEs can be either run by local governments or run independently. It is the vague organizational structure and operational structure that make TVEs an imperfect product of free contracting market economy (Chang & Wang, 1994; Pei, 1996).

Earlier administrative decentralization in urban China was designed as an experiment in the Sichuan province in October 1978, to revolute the power of decision-making to enterprises. The initial result of this experiment, which occurred before the reform & opening up, was considered positive and provided a justification for applying this initially Sichuan-specific decentralization model to nationwide urban reform (W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Administratively, reform firstly decentralized the urban power of decision-making to the enterprise level, in order to improve incentives and performances. Consequently, by 1985, most state-owned enterprises were not only allowed to self-adjust their output quantity, technologies, and their production timing, but were also allowed to retain a large fraction of their profits (R. H. Gordon & Li, 1991). In addition to this, as a result of administrative decentralization, domestic migration, occupational mobility and economic diversity were facilitated. On one hand, since the 1980s, a relatively flexible household registration system has allowed population migration across the country and conditional change of *hukou* registration (e.g., T. Cheng & Selden, 1994; K. W. Chan & Buckingham, 2008). The latest Beijing Population Census shows that, by 2010, people who didn't hold Beijing *hukou* but lived in Beijing accounted for 35.9 % of Beijing's residency [15]. On the other hand, the legal status of private-owned firms was confirmed in 1988, by adding a new article to the State Constitution (Dickson, 2007), which then motivated an increasing number of people to enter into entrepreneurship and facilitated occupational mobility. A result is that, in both

[14]See: *Law of the People's Republic of China on Township Enterprises*, Article 10.

[15]See: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics website:
http://tjj.beijing.gov.cn/zt/pcjdzl/rkpc/sjcx/pcgb/201603/P020160322618360863830.pdf.

urban and rural areas, a number of former communist cadres have been encouraged to enter into entrepreneurship (Nee, 1991; X. Wu, 2006).

Besides the reduction of government interference, as a part of soft reform, decentralization also denotes fiscal federalism. Before 1979, a system called "eating from one pot" was utilized to describe China's fiscal policy, referring to how the generalized tax collection and profit remittances were "controlled by the central government and then redistributed as needed to the provinces" (Feltenstein & Iwata, 2005, p.483). Under the system of fiscal decentralization, the disposition of shares of revenues and expenditure responsibilities are devolved from central to local governments (W.-W. Zhang, 2000; Tsui & Wang, 2004; Feltenstein & Iwata, 2005). Due to the expanded fiscal autonomy by provincial-level region, which began in 1979, local governments and enterprises are strongly motivated to promote their interests (W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Currently the 1994 tax-sharing reform is believed by a number of academics to have created the most far-reaching institutional restructuring of the central-local fiscal relations, relative to other reforms of decentralization (see: Shen, Jin, & Zou, 2012). Under this system, better developed regions are able to retain more revenue (X. Zhang, 2006; Shen et al., 2012). Although tax-sharing reform has promoted economic growth, such a reform policy will inevitably result in local governments increasing rent-seeking behaviors that create regional disparities and which are dependent on fiscal revenue generated as a result of growing land and real estate prices (e.g., X. Zhang, 2006; Hsing, 2006; L. Han & Kung, 2015). Furthermore, as expenditure is transferred to local governments, fiscal vulnerability of local governments is augmented (M. Y. S. Zhang & Barnett, 2014). Concerning the severity of fiscal risk of local governments, the 25-year tax-sharing policy was officially abolished in March 2018.

Hard Reforms Compared to soft reforms that are growth-oriented, hard reforms attempt to cut deeper into the old system and tend to be more institutionally transition-oriented (W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Hard reforms are introduced, because market mechanisms of soft reforms have been increasingly exhausted without any institutional changes. It is worth noting that, this transition-oriented reform in China doesn't really target institutional reform, but rather serves as a tactic to facilitate soft reforms or market force. Given this, those hard reforms institutionally decrease the role of

egalitarianism in distribution.

Hard reforms inevitably encounter greater resistance than soft reforms, as they do challenge the socialist distribution system. To ensure political stability and social acceptance, hard reforms are initially experimented with at a smaller scale and then later extended to large-scale practice. Even though markets have been liberalized to allow producers' self-determination since the 1980s, the transition is still defined as a partial economic reform of a socialist planned economy. Earlier growth-oriented soft reforms provided cushion for socialist firms, especially state-owned enterprises, to take party in a more efficient economy. Moreover, the growth of income and savings generated by soft reforms has been utilized to subsidize state-owned enterprises (W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Yet, it is the full responsibility for gains and losses imposed on enterprises that signifies the market-oriented mechanism.

China's systematic reform, thus, had to appear to be one of dichotomous choice, that was, either the administrative logic of state-determined prices and state-mandated coordination of exchange, or market logic of supply-demand-responsive prices and free contracting (Solinger, 1993). As a structural change of the old system, transition towards market economy poses a challenge of justifying the concept of "capital" under the socialist political system. Focused on the delineation of ownership in the public economy, a resultant system of "socialist market economy" was officially established in 1992. Such a market economy is an innovation characterized by "the predominance of public ownership combined with free competition among enterprise and market allocation of capital" (Brødsgaard & Rutten, 2017, p.95).

Social security reform, particularly pension reform, can be viewed as one of hard reforms in China, as the economic reform has dismantled the institutional basis for the social security system under state socialism. Influenced by the Soviet model, Chinese pension system had been established based on the state budget and enterprise funds since 1951. As a part of social security, pension was confined to urban workers served in the state owned work units and financed by enterprises during the ten-year domestic upheaval (1966-1976) (Zhu, 2002; B. Zheng, Yu, & Gao, 2010). However, the pension coverage was not brought to rural China[16]. In order to meet the demands of economic

[16]In rural area, the Five Guarantees was established as a social assistance program to guarantee food, housing, clothing, medical care, and burial expenses to childless and disabled men through

liberalization, since 1990s, China has initiated a new urban pension system, which is income-centered and financed by the contributions of employers and employees (T. Liu & Sun, 2016; Q. Lu, 2018). In recent years, the problem of population aging has been abbreviated and created an implicit pension debt crisis, as China's local governments use the social security benefits to pay the current retirees (C. Li & Lin, 2019). Given this, China is intending to initiate a reform on the current pension system, which has become a debatable issue[17] in China. In contrast to this, the endeavor of establishing a rural pension system had been in a morass for a long time (Shi, 2006). A very large number of rural residents were not covered by the rural old-age insurance until the "New Rural Social Pension System" was proposed in 2009 under the Hu-Wen administration. In 2014, the New Rural Social Pension system was established and merged into a basic pension insurance plan for all citizens (T. Liu & Sun, 2016; Q. Lu, 2018). In other words, rural residents are entirely covered by the national social pension plan under Xi-Li Administration.

Theoretically, despite being viewed as a drastic institutional change, the mainstay of public ownership and market mechanisms provide the justification for a coexistence of redistributive power and market competition in China's economy. As a result, a series of reforming systems have emerged, ranging from the labour market, the housing market, the capital market, and so on (see: W.-W. Zhang, 2000). Compared to soft reform, hard reform plays a more crucial role in altering the socialist stratification order based on redistribution, as shift to market competitions has definitely opened up alternative approaches to upward mobility through emergent entrepreneurship, labor and capital market, which has enhanced opportunities for social mobility that were previously controlled by decisions of the redistributive bureaucracy (Nee, 1996). The expansion of market opportunities brought about by such institutional transformation directly gives rise to the emergence of new middle class in urban China (Barton et al.,

collective support, as rural laborers produced and distributed goods communally under a collective-owned system of land and means of production (Shen & Williamson, 2010; B. Zheng et al., 2010). This social assistance program is still working in rural China.

[17]In order to deal with the burden of urban pension, Chinese policy makers have been considering gradually raising the retirement age and/or payment base (e.g., Pozen, 2013; Q. Zhang, Guo, & Li, 2015). However, the proposal sparks public debate, which concerns the increase of the pressure of employment and public finance.

2013; E. Y.-H. Tsang, 2014; Goodman, 2014). Besides this, market force generates a change in distribution of rewards that doesn't necessarily favor those who hold redistributive power but rather those who control the market by merits (Nee, 1996). In this dissertation, I argue that, in China, redistributive power, which implies competitiveness in market activities, has combined with a new kind of distributive mechanism characterized by meritocracy.

4.3.2 Persisting Socialist Status Hierarchy: A Hypothetical Socioculture

As a transition economy under the one-party leadership of socialist politburo, China retained some hierarchical systems during the state socialist period. As socialist legacies, these structural relations have evolved into practice patterns, even after China's transformation, and could be described as a specific socialist socioculture that denotes the continuance of earlier behavior patterns. Entering into the era of transformation, three earlier structural dimensions of socialist characteristics continue to organize the Chinese into symbolically distinct status groups based on: (1) A split in political affiliation: CCP membership vs. non-CCP membership; (2) A divide in household registration (*hukou*) status: agricultural *hukou* vs. non-agricultural *hukou*; (3) A divide in employment structure based on the ownership of organizational assets: inside the system vs. outside the system. It is presumed that the distribution of human habitus after economic reform is still anchored in those hierarchical systems of socialist character.

Communist Party Membership: A Form of Capital Institutionally, the system that supported Communist Party members enjoying the evident material benefits during Maoist phase definitely changed after China embarked onto reform. Due to availability through the liberalized market, the dependence on the Party for the distribution of housing, jobs, and other customer goods was drastically reduced. In addition to this, having a college degree now appears to be more efficient than being a Communist Party member for career mobility in some industrial sectors (Dickson & Rublee, 2000; Sato & Eto, 2008). However, Party membership is still necessary for those who anticipate applying for positions in the party/administrative bureaucracy or state-owned enterprises (Dickson, 2014).

Although market force does create new forms of human capital, Communist Party

membership definitely serves the function of obtaining political connections (Bian & Logan, 1996; Dickson, 2014). In a market economy with Chinese characteristics, Communist Party membership doesn't mean the advantages in resources allocation any more, but nevertheless plays an important role in accumulating the political and social capital that promote competitiveness in market activities. Briefly speaking, Communist Party membership acts as a symbolic capital that legitimizes the greater rewards of engaging in market activities for Party members. For example, the Party membership of private entrepreneurs is found to significantly facilitate private-sector performances (e.g., Nee, 1991; H. Li, Meng, Wang, & Zhou, 2008). Different from Bian and Logan's (1996) prediction that the advantage of Communist Party membership in market activity might be a temporary phenomenon in early reform, even in recent years, the returns to Party members are identified to be relatively positive in capital and labor markets (see also: McLaughlin, 2017).

However, Communist Party membership doesn't simply signify benefits, but also carries extralegal detention by Commissions for Discipline Inspection, *shuanggui*. Since introduced in 1994 by regulations on Party Discipline, *shuanggui* has developed out of a form of detention known as "confinement" practiced in imperial China and the Maoist period, and become an established practice in order to investigate Party members suspected of misconducts (Sapio, 2008). Without judicial involvement, *shuanggui* denotes that the outcome of an investigation is always arbitrarily decided (Sapio, 2008; X. Guo, 2014). The *shuanggui* policy is thus presumed to affect the way how a Party member participate in market activities. According to the *Supervision Law of the People's Republic of China* enforced in March 2018, *shuanggui* is abolished and replaced by a new system called *liuzhi*, extralegal detention not only for Party members but for all state officials.

A Rural-Urban Divide in Registration Status After 40-year of reform in China, the household registration system (*hukou* system) passed its 60th birthday in 2018. In the past decades, a wave of suggestions and debates were proposed about whether the *hukou* system should be abolished (K. W. Chan & Buckingham, 2008). Due to the new migratory requirements of the liberalized market, since the 1980s, a more flexible *hukou* system has been adopted: First, free domestic migration and settlement are permitted;

Second, it is possible for temporary residence permit holders to become permanent in settlement (T. Cheng & Selden, 1994; J. Young, 2013); Third, *hukou* status conversion (change from agricultural *hukou* status to non-agricultural *hukou* status) is allowed by merit-based selection or policy-based incorporation (C. Chen & Fan, 2016; X. Wu & Zheng, 2018).

Up to the date, there is no evident signal of abolishing the household registration system because the governance of the population is quite crucial in maintaining social stability (J. Young, 2013). Essentially, there is no doubt that the *hukou* system upholds China's rural-urban dual society system, and further causes inequality in social status between permanent urban and rural residents in cities (Kuang & Li, 2012). Issued in July 2014, *Opinions of the State Council on Further Promotion of Reform of the Household Registration System* is aimed at gradually calling off the distinctions between the agricultural *hukou* status and non-agricultural *hukou* status and establishing a uniform rural and urban household registration system[18]. Under the reform, which is combined with the *National New-type Urbanization Plan (2014-2020)* and local government policies of *hukou* conversion, 100 million rural migrants in cities and towns are expected to be provided uniform local *hukou* (C. Chen & Fan, 2016).

However, whether the establishment of a uniform rural and urban *hukou* system will eliminate the high-level discrimination against rural-to-urban migrants in cities is uncertain. Due to the long-term inequality in resource allocation, *hukou* status signifies a system of social identification that favors urban (non-agricultural) residents and discriminates against rural (agricultural) residents. It has been found that with the symbolic expression of human categories, individuals identifying with institutionally created hierarchies experience to cognitive, behavioral and socio-economic inequality in a liberalized market. Through a designed experiment in Beijing, the current urban-rural divide based on *hukou* status has been shown to help justify prejudice and stereotypes leveled at rural residents (Kuang & Li, 2012). Through out the country, non-agricultural *hukou* holders have been more likely to be formally employed than agricultural *hukou* holders in the labor market (S. Zhang & Cao, 2017). Psychologi-

[18] *Opinions of the State Council on Further Promotion of Reform of the Household Registration System*, Article 9.

cally, the *hukou* system provides an unconscious mode of social domination that occurs within everyday life. Urban-rural inequality is thus symbolically confirmed in a hierarchical framework. The results of a relevant experimental study suggest that the salience of *hukou* status significantly reduces incentivized cognitive task of rural youth, which leads to a decrease of earnings (Afridi et al., 2015). Analogous to India's caste system, China's *hukou* system has been proved to influence individuals at the cognitive and behavioral level (Hoff & Pandey, 2006; Afridi et al., 2015). From this perspective, this long-established policy of social exclusion has evolved into a practice system and has intensified inequality through the intrinsic motivations and behavior of individuals (see also: Kuang & Li, 2012; Afridi et al., 2015).

A Dichotomy in Employment Structure The traditional socialist occupational structure exists in a new form that is informed by the 1998 institutional reform. This reform program concerns both the socialist cadre-worker dichotomy and the vertical relationship of property rights to the state: Firstly, market transformations have further divided the employment system based on the ownership sector of organizational assets into two subsystems: the inside the state system (employed by public sector work units) and the outside the state system (employed by non-public work units). Secondly, a series of reforming policies have transformed the cadre-worker dichotomy into a new dichotomy between the personnel in state-budgeted posts and the rest. This new division system is called the *bianzhi* system in Chinese (Brødsgaard, 2002, 2006). Personnel within the *bianzhi* system include millions of state-salaried employees (Brødsgaard, 2002). As a matter of fact, not all staff serving in the public sector are salaried by the state budget. Personnel salaried by the state budget signify an elite insider group inside the state system.

The following three groups divide up the state-salaried system: personnel in budgeted posts of the party and government administrative organ, the public service organizations (i.e., public university, public hospital), and the state-owned enterprises. Collective and private sectors are out of the state system (see also: Brødsgaard, 2006). Practically, it is required under fiscal decentralization to establish standardization in policy implementation by the soft centralization of regulatory state-party functionaries at the provincial level. As the main mechanism of this soft centralization,the *bianzhi*

system denotes that the allocated budgets are grounded in authorized number of personnel within the state system (Mertha, 2005). Contrary to the conventional bureaucracies whose personnel numbers are based on budget, the authorized allocation of personnel inside the state system goes the other way around and is akin to that of the USSR (Mertha, 2005). Therefore, the *bianzhi* system still signifies an occupational structure of socialist characteristics that transfers cadre status in the old state structure to the status of being salaried inside the state system (see also: Brødsgaard, 2012).

In China, personnel within the state-salaried system, particularly in budgeted posts of the party and government administrative agencies, represent an "elite cadre group" that attempts to catch prior opportunities in a growing marketplace (Bian, 2002). Particularly in the earlier reform, this elite group took full advantages of social and political capital to create network capitalism (Boisot & Child, 1996; Bian, 2002). Attributed to the redistribution system, elites within the state system have evident positional advantages within the capitalist network, because they can "use their access to state resource to strike it rich on the market, and use their authority over licenses, tax breaks, and property to exploit entrepreneurs" (Smart & Hsu, 2007, p. 175). Concerning the former, on the one hand, it is the positional effect of socialist redistribution system that leads some "insiders" to get highly paid and rewarded (e.g., T. Lin & Wu, 2009; X. Wu, 2013; Zang & Chen, 2015). This is the case especially with regard to work unit hierarchy based on ownership of organizational assets which have been found to shape urban class formation through unequal distribution of income and welfare benefits (Solinger, 1995; X. Wu, 2013). On the other hand, an increasing number of elite insiders and their relatives are becoming involved in business activities, using the advantages of administrative control and privileges to access greater rates of income returns for themselves and create new market opportunities of public assets (E. W. Tsang, 1998; Walder, 2003; X. Wu, 2006; Bian, Wang, Zhang, & Cheng, 2012).

Concerning the latter, since the endorsement of insiders in government agencies is quite significant in China's market competition, entrepreneurs have to seek the favor of local cadres to gain access to resources and marketing outlets (Nee, 1991). This is described as the "patron-client" relationship between state system insiders and non-state entrepreneurs (Wank, 1996, p. 820). In China, business agencies, mainly private

and foreign firms, always act as "rent-seekers" in market activities, which motivates companies to have to establish good connections and strive to have positive interactions with officials (Nee, 1991; E. W. Tsang, 1998; Taormina & Gao, 2010). The pervasiveness of the patron-client system influences state system insiders to become increasingly involved in private-public transactional corrupt behaviors (Smart & Hsu, 2007; Ko & Weng, 2012). As a kind of political cultural under reform, using positional capital to exchange for favors has even become a everyday practice among some elite state insiders (Keliher & Wu, 2016). However, this is now beginning to change as a result of Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign.

5 A Quantitative Illustration: The Underlying Structure of Social Stratification in Today's China

In this chapter I employ a quantitative technique that allows us to see the cloud of individuals categorized into a social stratum in today's China. It is divided into three sections presenting a comprehensive empirical research of inequality in China. The first section justifies the urban-rural dual structure in the research design, and presents an introduction of the data analysis technique called multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), and describes how this technique will be applied in the empirical study. The last section presents the results of the analysis, and further interprets the results. Overall, the hypotheses are largely verified. In spite of the growth of emerging classes in China, the persisting socialist hierarchical system continues to affect social stratification in today's China. Moreover, the socialist legacies manifest more evident signs in rural social structure than in urban society.

5.1 The Context of Research Design

5.1.1 Symbolic Inequality of Socialist Character

As we have already seen in earlier chapters, persisting socialist hierarchies are not the stratification structured by market force, but rather the institutional orders ranked through redistribution mechanism. These institutionalized legacies are believed to shape the practice modes of humans, which justify the configuration of social structure of socialist character, through raising class consciousness. The maintenance of socialist structure virtually signifies the indispensability of a certain political system, even for the initiation of transformation. In this sense, the arranged hierarchical systems of socialist character can be called symbolic inequalities that legitimize the persistence of some institutional orders in a significant transformation.

Brought together by Max Weber, the objectivity of material differences and the subjectivity of representations together form the root of social group (i.e. class) divi-

sions. Meanwhile, whatever the form it takes, any capital exerts symbolic power as soon as it is recognized (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013). Symbolic capital, furthermore, can be understood as the structural root of any other capital. In this sense, I agree with the description provided by Jodhka et al. (2017) that a given social class will symbolically distinguish itself from other classes. In short, symbolic dimensions of inequality largely denote the distinctions of the ownership of other forms of capital. An example in the literature is that through the display of taste, the role of "female" provides an acceptable guarantee of economic capital, because women are considered to make taste (e.g., C. Vincent & Ball, 2007).

If legacies of socialist hierarchies, in this study, are interpreted through the symbolic dimension of inequality, it is also reasonable to expect that the symbolically mediated practice tendency is the key to understanding how China's social stratification is structured after transformation. Analogous to gender dominance or racism, those recognitions of socialist characteristic are considered to include actions that have discriminatory implications in market-oriented social domination. Understood by the logic of practice, the exhibition of a symbolic recognition transforms abstract capital into more concrete capital of objective material and social representation, because the competitiveness of a social group or class is universally granted by symbolic credit (see also: Bourdieu, 1990b). This mechanism has been employed to explore the role of persisting socialist hierarchical systems in stratifying a transforming society. As summarized in chapter 4, Table 5 presents the persisting socialist hierarchies and their symbolic meanings of inequality.

5.1.2 Urban-Rural Dualistic Structure

In this section, a quantitative method will be adopted to analyze the underlying structure of inequality in today's China. The focus of this analysis will be on the social stratification in urban and rural China respectively, as the urban-rural cleavage is thought to be the most important aspect of social structure and characterizes contemporary China as "one country, two societies" (Whyte, 2010c, p. 1). Even though the spatial hierarchy of prioritizing the city over the countryside was created and promoted during the Maoist period, the urban-rural divide has become increasingly evident following

Table 5: Symbolic inequality of socialist character after China's reform and opening up

Symbolic Dimension of Inequality	Institutionalized or Internalized Division(s)
Agricultural *hukou* status vs. Non-agricultural *hukou* status	Discrimination to rural-to-urban migrants: Unequal access to labor market, to social welfare, and to education, etc.
Communist Party membership vs. Non-Communist Party membership	Advantages for CCP membership in getting promoted in the party/administrative system; and in facilitating performance in capital or labor market.
Inside the state system vs. Outside the state system	Being employed within the state system, particularly being salaried by the state budget, denotes more privileges to be highly paid and more opportunities to access to market priorities.

Source: Self-elaborated, based on Bian (2002), Smart and Hsu (2007), Zeuthen and Griffiths (2011), Kuang and Li (2012), Y. Guo (2016), McLaughlin (2017), etc. See also the description in chapter 4.

the transformation. In terms of economic inequality particularly, the urban-rural disparity reached its most tenuous point in 1984 owning to the rural reform that began in 1978. Following this reform, such inequality has continued to grow, with the exception of the period between 1995 and 1997 during which the price of agricultural products was raised by the government (M. Lu & Chen, 2006). The data published by National Bureau of Statistics of China demonstrates that in 2017, per capita disposal income in the city was 36396 Chinese Yuan (equal to 4650 Euro), almost 3 times the amount of capita disposal income rural households (12432 Chinese Yuan, equal to 1588 Euro).[19]

This large income gap between urban and rural China is a product of the reforming policies that have always been biased toward urban area and residents. Although a series of policies, such as the increase in procurement prices for agricultural products and the relaxation of restrictions on rural-urban migration, have been employed to reduce the urban-rural division and do have some positive effects, urban residents have continued to receive a number of socioeconomic privileges that are unavailable to rural residents (D. T. Yang, 1999). Essentially, these urban-biased policies have been further

[19]See: National Bureau of Statistics of China website: http://data.stats.gov.cn/english/easyquery.htm?cn=C01.

justified through the continuance of the household registration system (*hukou* system) (see: K. W. Chan & Buckingham, 2008; Kuang & Li, 2012). For instance, there is still institutionalized discrimination with regard to access to resources and opportunities, such as social welfare and employment in labor market (Zeuthen & Griffiths, 2011; F. Cai, 2011)[20]. It is the established boundary between city and countryside that creates a developmental system of duality between town and country (see also: Zeuthen & Griffiths, 2011).

Furthermore, although Chinese society is structured by a growing free market force, urban-rural bifurcation has become pronounced, shaping social stratification. It is worth mentioning that, encouraged by a more flexible *hukou* policy and rapid urbanization, since the mid-1980s, rural-to-urban migration has increased. Almost at pace with reforming policies, such phenomenon of rural-to-urban migration contributes to structural changes in both rural and urban societies. Opportunities for labor migration are significant for rural residents in escaping poverty (Du, Park, & Wang, 2005). At the same time, rural-to-urban migration threatens established provider-receiver relations between government officials and urban residents in urban areas (Tang & Yang, 2008). As a result, urban society is informed as a stratified system with capitalist characteristics. Migrant workers have already become an indispensable part of the labor force, because accumulating construction project and the flourishing private-sector economy are dependent on these workforces. Data from the *2016 China Labor Statistical Yearbook* shows that, with regard to urban employment working hours, 41.9% of agricultural *hukou* holders work more than 48 hours per week, much more than the 24.9% for non-agricultural *hukou* holders[21]. In Beijing, rural migrant workers usually engage in construction projects, or other jobs related to textile, mining, and coal industries in the city (Guang, 2001). Additionally, under the *hukou* system, migrants are not allowed to hold permanent urban residency rights and other associated social benefits (Kuang & Li, 2012). In this sense, discrimination against rural-to-urban migrants not

[20]Since 2005, a series of official papers have been issued, to promote urban-rural integration. Meanwhile, Chengdu and Chongqing in southwestern China were designated experimental districts for urban-rural integration in 2007. See: Ye (2010); Zeuthen and Griffiths (2011).

[21]See: Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China website: http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/SYrlzyhshbzb/zwgk/szrs/tongjinianjian/201803/t20180302_289122.html.

only marginalizes that group in urban society, but also characterizes Chinese urban social structure as an *urban caste system* (Tang & Yang, 2008; Kuang & Li, 2012).

5.2 Empirical Research Method

5.2.1 Multiple Correspondence Analysis: An Analysis Technique

In this study, multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) will be used to detect whether, and to what extent, inequality in today's China is reproduced from the hierarchical system under state socialism. In this investigation, MCA is an appropriate methodological technique, as the variables can be categorically analyzed. Practically, as a data analysis technique, MCA is universally applied for nominal categorical variables, such as gender (Abdi & Valentin, 2007). In the social sciences, MCA became a preferred method in the late 1970s, and it is perhaps best known for its application by Pierre Bourdieu. In the book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Bourdieu used MCA to explore how each class fraction was characterized by a certain configuration. As a statistical technique, MCA is commonly used by Bourdieu's followers, particularly in approaching characteristic differences between social classes (e.g., Kahma & Toikka, 2012; Jodhka et al., 2017).

MCA is also known as "homogeneity analysis," as it attempts to represent the structural relationships between variables in a space of reduced dimension (Blasius & Thiessen, 2001; Le Roux & Rouanet, 2010). Mathematically, in MCA, a rectangle array of data (matrix) is displayed by "rows" that represent individuals and "columns" that present the categorical variables (Abdi & Valentin, 2007; Le Roux & Rouanet, 2010). In this dimensional space, visualized proximity denotes the similarity of categories and individuals. In practice, MCA is applicable to a set of more than two categorical variables and therefore, it is viewed as an extension of simple correspondence analysis (CA: Greenacre, 2006; Nenadic & Greenacre, 2007). The fundamental idea behind simple CA techniques is that the principle of distributional equivalence is more likely to be displayed through frequency data (e.g., Greenacre & Lewi, 2009). Greenacre summarized two implications about the use of MCA: The first is that it leads to the investigation of canonical correlations between sets of variables; the second is that it concerns the geometric observation that is linked to "data visualization and which has

many similarities to Pearson-style principal component analysis" (Greenacre, 2006, p.42). Given that, it is necessary for variables to be coded categorical in MCA. If survey data at the individual-level is used in an empirical study, the possible answers as well as the demographic variables (gender, age, education, marital status etc.) have to be coded as nominal categories. Take a very simple example of respondent-level data of 2017 disposable income inequality nationwide in China. The following include the considered answers:

A. Much lower than 24,408 [22] RMB yuan

B. Very slightly lower than 24,408 RMB yuan

C. Very slightly higher than 24,408 RMB yuan

D. Much higher than 24,408 RMB yuan

These are thus three possible response categories:

1. Lower income (corresponding to answer A)
2. Middle income (corresponding to answer B and C)
3. Higher income (corresponding to answer D)

In a matrix based on survey data, each row describes an individual respondent and the columns represent the categories of responses over all items. Consequently, an estimation is made through the display of the positions of individual subjects and of response categories in a map (Greenacre, 2006; Blasius & Thiessen, 2006). Following the universally accepted principle of "letting the data speak for itself," [23] MCA is indeed an appropriate method to investigate the relevance of class position in social stratification, since such correspondence analysis is often employed to "explore the structure of data rather than to test for significance" (Blasius & Thiessen, 2006, p. 233).

[22] Published by National Bureau of Statistics of China website, the 2017 median disposable income nationwide is 24,408 RMB yuan; See: http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201801/t20180118_1574931.html.

[23] "Letting the data speak for itself" is a basic principle to minimize bias in both quantitative and qualitative investigation, and accepted by most scholars. See: D. Walker and Myrick (2006), Blasius and Thiessen (2006), Strayer (2012), etc.

5.2.2 Variables and Data

Inequality Variables Max Weber's theoretical contribution to the social stratification in a market environment is utilized in this study to operationalize inequality in today's China, for the reform and opening up establishes a system of rewards based on merits. In Weber's terminology, class situation is used more frequently than class itself, as class only describes the economic or non-social dimension of capital, while class situation is the base for communal action that emerges from a group of people have component of their life chances in common (Weber, 1946). For Weber, life chances speak to class position as defined in terms of market advantages in general. Aside from the possession of goods and opportunities for income, Weber emphasized, life chance also concerns the conditions of commodities and labor market. That is to say that life chance is structurally situated by the disposal of or control over goods and skills. Essentially, this control further implies an individual's possession of material property, social status and power, and determines a person's class situation (Weber, 1946; Bendix, 1974). From a Weberian perspective, hence, persons assigned to a certain class group occupy the same class situation (Weber, 1946; Barbalet, 1980).

Viewed as one of Weber's major contributions to the study of social stratification, this description doesn't contradict but rather broaden Marx's understanding of class in market situations (Parkin, 1972). In particular, Weber's interpretation of an individual's class situation is coherent to the relations of production to which Marx refers as determinants of classes because once a person enters into a relation of production, he or she has to be economically, politically, and socially meaningful in the construction of a certain hierarchical relation (see also: Anthias, 2001).

Another significant principle of Weber's theory of social stratification, is his delineation between the economic achievement (class) and social status (e.g., Barbalet, 1980; Gane, 2005). As a complex and abstract term, status is necessarily to be understood in the context of status group, which refers not only to the honor or esteem value of communities, but also to the estate. In Weber's well-known work *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, status is closely associated with a legitimate type of domination that specifically exists in a form of exercised authority or influence (Weber, 1978; Gane, 2005). In a market situation, the prestige rewards for

an occupational role are associated with its period-specific social function and contribution, which leads to the claim that occupation is a convincing index for revealing the status dimension of social stratification (e.g., Hatt, 1950; Hollingshead et al., 2011). Additionally, stated by Weber, in principle, the power that may be generated by a party or a political club also determines a person's struggle for life chance. The party, in Weber's opinion, is an organization founded upon social relationships, and is always directed toward a planned goal striven for in a planned way (Weber, 1978; Gane, 2005), which leads to the characterization of power as a person's ability to engage in social activities and to attain goals. Practically, in line with Weber's discussion, such power is exercised through organizations, particularly the modern organizations of bureaucracy and of civil service (Weber, 1946). Concerning the essence of power, as an effective instrument for facilitating socioeconomic achievements, Weber conceived of the idea of social networks as an effective instruments that are analogous to "social capital" (Trigilia, 2001).

For Weber and his followers, the three components of stratification above emphasize a person's competitiveness. Literally, this competitiveness or advantage denotes efficiency and outlines the common ground of the market system, and of an emerging society with capitalist characteristics (Cochoy, 1998). Thus, even for the maintenance of a socialist political system, it is reasonable to define transforming Chinese society as a market-oriented situation. In this empirical study, Weber's model of three-components of stratification will be used to refer to how an individual is positioned in a market-oriented structural relation. China's inequality is then inevitably configured by the interplay between wealth, social status, and power. Table 2 demonstrates how these three variables of inequality will be operated.

Categorical Data This part of the empirical investigation utilizes data from 2015 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS). The raw data is available to all researchers. Launched in 2003 by Renmin University and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the CGSS is a successive survey of China's urban and rural societies, mainly at the individual and household levels, in order to collect panel data for tracking the dynamics of social stratification and life quality in China (see: Bian & Li, 2012). CGSS data is self-reported, nationally representative, and has been commonly used as

Table 6: Inequality variables and operation

Variables	Operation
Wealth	Income and other fortune (e.g., real estate property, private vehicle, stock, savings, etc.).
Status	Occupational status
Power	Work organizations; Position within the organization (decision power); Social network.

Source: Self-elaborated, primarily based on Weber (1946), Weber (1978), Liberatos et al. (1988), etc.

empirical evidence in social science research on China (Xu, Perkins, & Chow, 2010; Z. Zhang & Treiman, 2013; Xie & Zhou, 2014; Luo, 2014). In the CGSS, targeted respondents for interviewing are civilian adults over the age of 18. The 2015 CGSS creates 10968 samples that cover 28 provincial-level administrative areas[24]. Hence, it is statistically appropriate for observing the social structure by this dataset. In order to apply the MCA, all sets of the quantitative data from the 2015 CGSS are transformed to the sets of categorical data.

Socialist Hierarchies Variable Data The socialist hierarchy variables discussed here include CCP affiliation, *hukou* status and a dichotomy in employment structure, because these classifications concern the symbolic dimension of socialist hierarchy. Each variable can be measured and categorized via survey responses as follows:

(1) Party Affiliation: From the responses of political affiliation survey I construct the following categories:

(a) *No Communist Party member* (NPA; includes the masses and the communist youth league member)

(b) *Democratic parties member* (DPM)

(c) *Communist Party member* (CPM)

[24]Except for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), Macau SAR and Taiwan, 31 provincial-level administrative regions in mainland China operates socialist political system; About the description of 2015 CGSS, see Chinese National Survey Data Archive website: http://cnsda.ruc.edu.cn/index.php?r=site/article&id=164 (in Chinese).

(2) *Hukou* Status: From the Responses of *hukou* status investigation I constructed categories below:

(a) *Agricultural hukou status* (AHS)

(b) *Non-agricultural hukou status* (NHS; since birth, including some blue-seal *hukou*[25] holders and local *hukou*[26] holders who formerly held non-agricultural *hukou*)

(c) *Rural-to-urban hukou* (RHS; *hukou* conversion allowed by merit-based selection or policy-based incorporation, including some blue-seal *hukou* holders, and local *hukou* holders whose former *hukou* status is agricultural *hukou*)

(3) A Dichotomy of Being Employed: The dichotomy of employment structure is a town-specific concept that describes a divided employment system based on the ownership sector of organizational assets, which determines the work unit type. The responses of relevant survey items have been constructed into the following categories:

(a) *Inside the state system* (IS; respondents who are employed in state-sector units[27])

(b) *Outside the state system* (OS; respondents who are employed in non state-sector units[28])

[25]Blue seal *hukou* is a transitional urban *hukou* created in early 1990s, mainly for wealthy, educated and skilled candidates. It is possible for blue-seal holders to become permanent local urban *hukou* holders after five-year qualified residency. This policy of valid urban *hukou* is created to facilitate population mobility and economic vitality (see: F.-L. Wang, 2004; Luo, 2012). According to *Opinions of the State Council on Further Promotion of Reform of the Household Registration System* issued by the State Council, the blue seal *hukou* was effectively terminated in July 2014.

[26]Raised in July 2014 *Opinions of the State Council on Further Promotion of Reform of the Household Registration System* issued by the State Council, the system of household registration in urban and rural areas shall be unified, and the system of residence permit shall be applied on a full scale. Afterwards, provincial-level administrative regions successively began to gradually unify agricultural and non-agricultural *hukou* as uniform local *hukou*.

[27]This empirical study provides a measurement of "being employed inside/outside the state system". In the 2015 CGSS, inside the state system (IS) only describes public organizations (WU3) and state-owned or holding enterprises (IS in WU2), because respondents who work for party and government systems are not required to answer to the ownership sector. Given that, the work unit type "party and government agencies" (WU1) are supplemented in this measurement.

[28]The ownership type can be collective-owned or holding, private ownership or holding, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan-funded or holding, foreign investment or holding and other possible types.

Inequality Variable Data According to Weber's three-component theory of social stratification, economic capital, social status, and power are the most important variables to measure one's class situation in a market-oriented society. These inequality variables are indexed as follows:

(1) Economic Capital: In the 2015 CGSS, survey items that attempt to explore the economic situation of respondents are all at the household-level. The responses of three significant investigations are categorically constructed to measure a household's possession of material resources in China's contemporary society:

(a) *Property ownership* (PO): the total number of houses with partial or full property ownership, coded as PO0-PO99 (totaling 0 to 99).

(b) *Private vehicle ownership* (PV): full ownership of a private vehicle, PV1 if yes, PV0 if no.

(c) *Economic condition* (EC): the economic status of the local area, coded as EC1-EC5, or far below average to far above average, respectively.

(2) Social Status: Social influence of a respondent's occupation is utilized as the index of an individual's social status. Subjective ratings by the respondents about how they perceive the social honer and influence of their occupation are used to indicate social status. The responses towards the relevant survey item are categorically constructed as follows:

(a) *Social prestige* (SP): the extent to which a respondent agrees that his/her job helps many people, coded as SP1-SP5, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

(b) *Social influence* (SI): the extent to which a respondent agrees that his/her job benefits society, coded as SI1-SI5, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

(3) Power: From the responses for the type of work units, decision power, and social network, I construct corresponding categories to measure a respondent's power in urban China:

(a) *Work unit type* (WU): a respondent is asked whether he/she works within the party or a government agency (WU1); an enterprise (WU2); a public organization (WU3); a social organization or a residents'/villagers' committee (WU4); the army (WU6); or is self-employed (WU5).

(b) *Decision power* (DP): the extent to which a respondent makes independent

decisions in his/her work, coded as DP1-DP4, from "highly independent" to "high dependently."

(c) *Social network* (SN): the frequency that a respondent is asked to provide help to others, because of his/her work, coded as SN1-SN5, from "very often" to "never."

(4) Additional power indicators of rural society: Due to the dualistic employment status between city and countryside, it is necessary to add other survey items to measure power in rural China. Besides non-agricultural work unit type, another indicator for the measurement of workplace is the division between agricultural work and non-agricultural work. Additionally, local kin and networks exert sociocultural forces to accomplish local coordination that facilitates reform processes in rural China (N. Lin, 1995). This is to say that locality simultaneously denotes an individual's social capital and position in rural society. Thus, I construct following categories from responses of relevant survey items:

(a) *Employment status* (ES): the employment status a respondent is current in, including non-agricultural work (ES1); agricultural work, had been in non-agricultural work (ES2); agricultural work, hadn't been in non-agricultural work (ES3); jobless, had only been in agricultural work (ES4); jobless, had been in non-agricultural work (ES5); never been in any work (ES6).

(b) *Locality* (LO): the extent to which a respondent is acquainted with his/her neighbors, coded as LO1-LO5, from "not very acquainted" to "very acquainted."

Demographic Variable Data In order to comprehensively investigate the structural relation between symbolic classifications and inequality, I then construct categories for some key demographic variables as follows:

(1) Gender: male (G1); female (G2).

(2) Marital Status: unmarried (M1); married (M2); divorced (M3); widowed (M4); no answer (M99).

(3) Educational level (highest attained): never attended school formally (S1); literacy education[29](S2); primary school (S3); middle school (S4); vocational high school (S5); high school (S6); secondary specialized school (S7); apprentice school

[29]Adult illiteracy for China was nearly 80% in 1949. In order to reduce the adult illiteracy rate, the newly-established Chinese government attached great importance to literacy education.

(S8); specialized college (part-time) (S9); specialized college (full-time) (S10); University (part-time) (S11); University (full-time) (S12); graduate school and higher (S13).

(4) Age: born earlier than 1960 (A1); later than 1960 (A2); later than 1970 (A3); later than 1980 (A4); later than 1990 (A5).

Other Supplementary Variable Data Below are the supplementary variables in this empirical research:

(1) Relative socioeconomic position: compared to the peers, respondents are asked to identify their current socioeconomic position as relatively higher (SIP1), middle (SIP2), or relatively lower (SIP3).

(2) Change of socioeconomic position: compared to the past three years, respondents are asked to identify changes in socioeconomic position as having increased (CSP1), stayed almost the same (CSP2), or decreased (CSP3).

5.3 Results and Interpretation

The 2015 CGSS received 10968 valid copies of survey responses, of which 6470 targeted urban areas, and the rest of the 4498 targeting rural areas. According to data published by the World Bank, 55.5% of the population of China live in urban settlements. The proportion of urban samples to rural samples, thus, is technically appropriate to comprehensively demonstrate the structural relations between urban and rural China.

5.3.1 Analysis of Inequality in Urban China

The underlying structure of the urban data set from the 2015 CGSS is analyzed using multiple correspondence analysis. Figures 8-10 present how categories of political affiliation, household registration (*hukou* status), and employment system are distributed in urban China respectively. Approximately 14% of the 6470 urban respondents are shown in Figure 8 as Communist Party members (CPM), which to some extent denotes the makeup of the "elite class." It is revealed in Figure 9 that less than half of urban residents have been identified as non-agricultural *hukou* holders (NHS) since birth. In fact, due to the flexible household registration policies, there is a large number of urban residents that are agricultural *hukou* holders (AHS) and rural-to-urban *hukou*

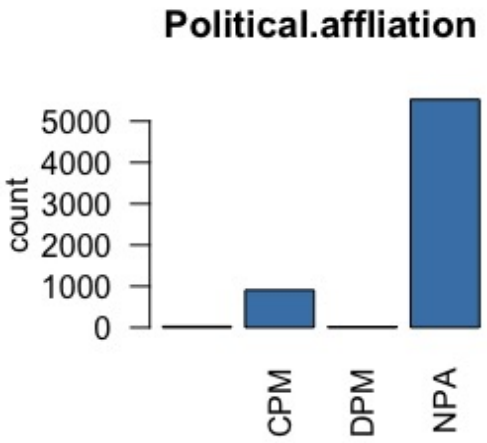


Figure 8: Distribution of party affiliation among urban respondents

holders (RHS). It has been demonstrated from the 2015 CGSS data that nearly 20% of the urban residents have transformed their original agricultural *hukou* status into permanent urban registration through a number of ways, including entering into college, employment, serving in the army, marriage, etc. In addition, Figure 10 indicates that even for the emergence and prosperity of the non-public sector of the economy, work units of the state system still play a remarkable role.

Shown in Figure 12 is the correlation between 17 variables and MCA principle dimensions. It is evident that the variables of gender and political affiliation are most correlated with the first dimension, which explains the largest variation in the urban-based data. Similarly, the variables of change of socioeconomic position, property ownership, social prestige and influence, and marital status are most correlated with the second dimension that explains the second largest variation.

In order to investigate the role of persisting inequality in the socialist system in stratifying social structure, a MCA of the symbolic categories of socialist hierarchies is designed. Figure 13 displays a MCA map of the symbolic configuration of urban social structure. As seen from the MCA map, the items "no party affiliation" and "agricultural *hukou* status" are located negatively in relation to "Communist Party member" and "non-agricultural *hukou* status/rural-to-urban *hukou* status". It additionally demonstrates through quadrant 1 (upper right) that both being a Party member and

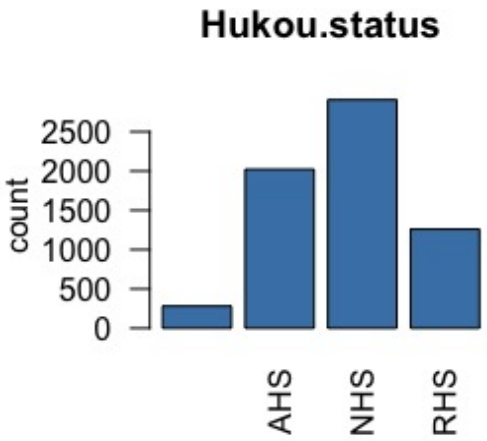
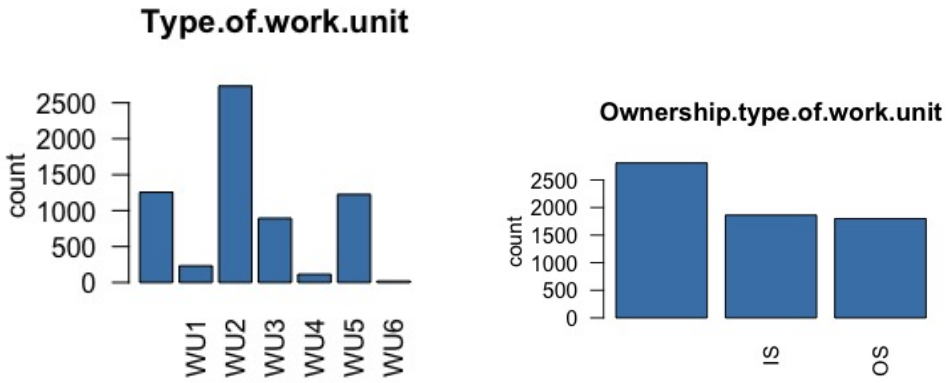


Figure 9: Distribution of *hukou* status among urban respondents



(a) Distribution of work unit type among urban respondents

(b) Distribution of ownership sector among urban respondents

Figure 10: Distribution of being employed by the state system in urban China

Note: WU1+IS

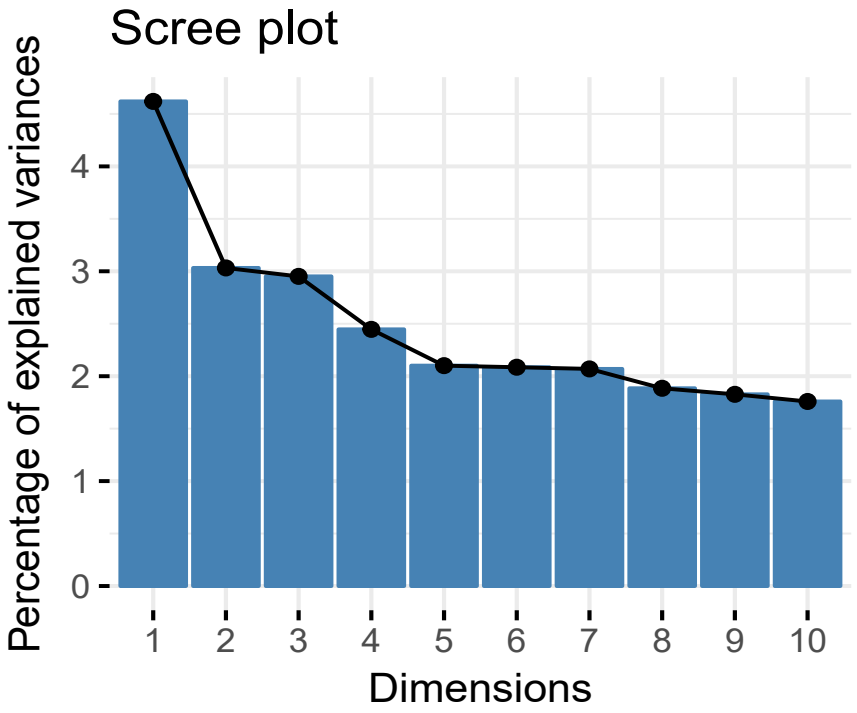


Figure 11: Percentages of inertia explained by the MCA dimensions: based on urban samples

being employed in a public organization (state-owned) are the most evident traits of the advantageous social group. Accordingly, quadrant 1 (upper right) and quadrant 3 (lower right) illustrates the persisting socialist inequality system. Conversely, quadrant 2 (upper left) and quadrant 4 (lower right) demonstrate the emerging classes, since the non-public sectors of the economy are the fruits of economic transformation.

Figure 14 is a supplementary presentation that contains comprehensive variable categories and speaks to the structural root of China's inequality. In the first place, located in the first quadrant (upper right), the response item EC4 (economic condition above average), SIP1 (self-identified relatively higher socioeconomic position), PO3 (3 properties), PO2 (2 properties), PV1 (full ownership of private vehicle), DP1 (strong decision power) are close to each other. Such similarity denotes that the first quadrant describes the social groups or classes that are more likely to be positioned in the middle class and above. Shown in this quadrant, SP1 and SI1 are located far away from the center point, which implies that compared to economic condition, social status plays a more evident role in recognizing an individual's class position. Exhibited by quadrant 1, it is found that item RHS (rural to urban *hukou* status), WU1(party and

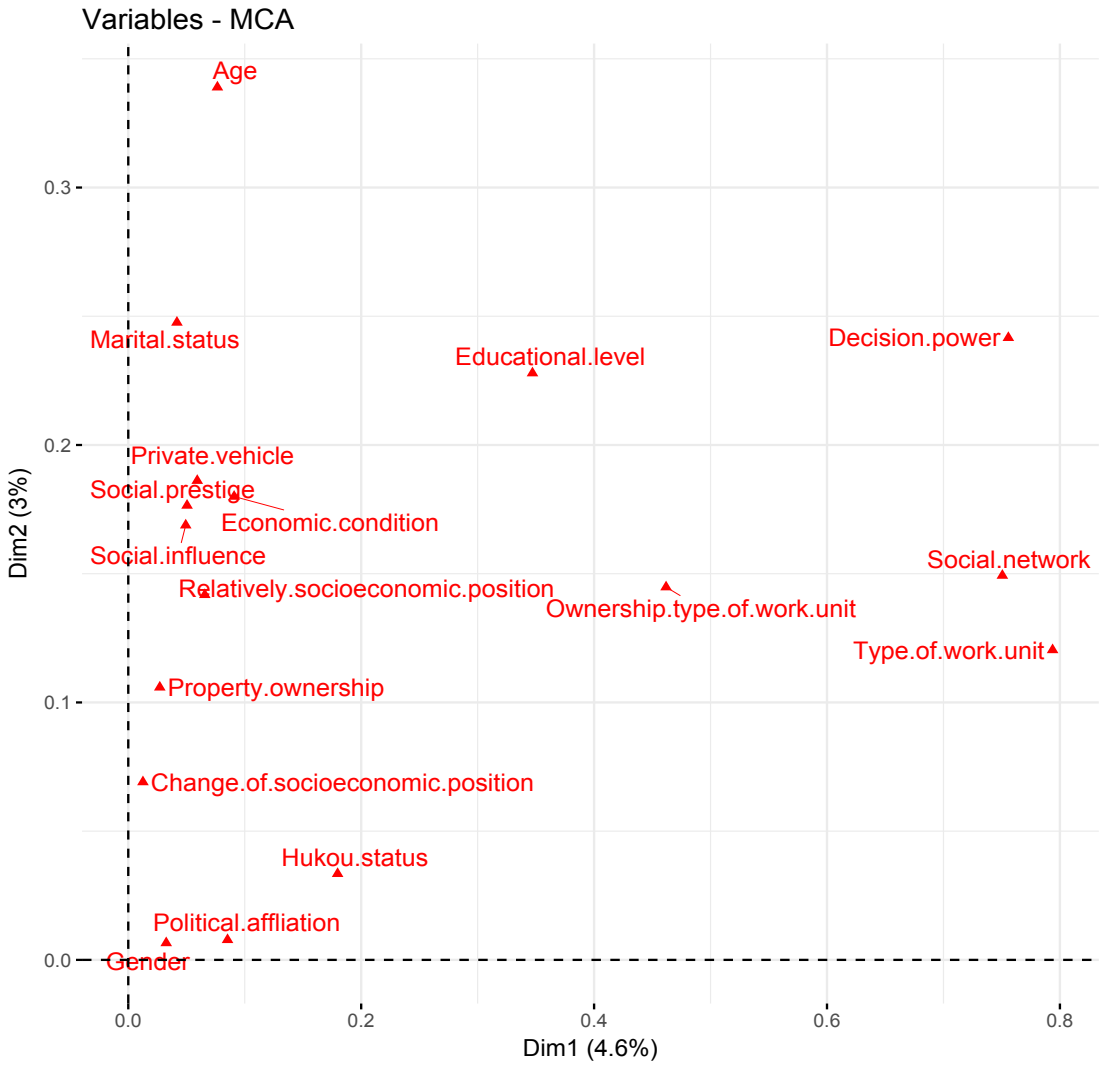


Figure 12: Correlation between variables and MCA principle dimensions: based on urban samples

government agencies) and CPM (Communist Party membership) are close to the socioeconomic characters shown in the social classes. With regard to middle class status and above, the distance to center point suggests that being employed in the party and government system (WU1) reflects more representative traits than being a Communist Party member and being registered as an urban resident. It should also be noted that, the items of those advantageous characteristics are located closer to S10, S11, S12 and S13, which means that education level have a positive effect on one's socioeconomic achievements in market-oriented society. The opposite quadrant (lower left) displays the negatively correlated variable categories, such as worse economic condition (EC1, EC2), lower self-identified socioeconomic position (SIP3), and correspondingly lower educational level (S1, S3). Introduced by all these traits is the urban vulnerable group that is technically called the "lower class." Simultaneously, the spatial distance demonstrates that, the lower class respondents are older in age (A1) and likely to be non-Communist Party members (NPA). However, as the NPA item is situated next to the center point, non-Communist Party membership is not a significant factor for characterizing this class.

The above interpretations of Figure 14 largely verify one of the hypotheses proposed in this dissertation: even though item IS (inside the state system) exhibits a deviant order, respondents who work in the party and government system continue to be categorized into relatively higher social strata. However, the item that concerns the employment of party and government agencies is invisible in Figure 13. Instead, this location is occupied by item "Communist Party member." One possible explanation is that, even though it is recruited as an elite group in schools and workplaces, Communist Party membership is no longer attached to the public-sector system. As a result, compared to civil servants in the party and government system, Communist Party membership doesn't necessarily claim absolute superiority. In addition, uncovered by calculating the chi-square distance between response categories and then representing them geographically as maps, the association reveals that respondents who are in better economic conditions (PO2, PO3, PV1), higher in social status (SP1, SI1), stronger in power (DP1, SN2), and/or in a relatively higher self-identified socioeconomic position (SIP1) are more likely to be Communist Party members (CPM) and registered

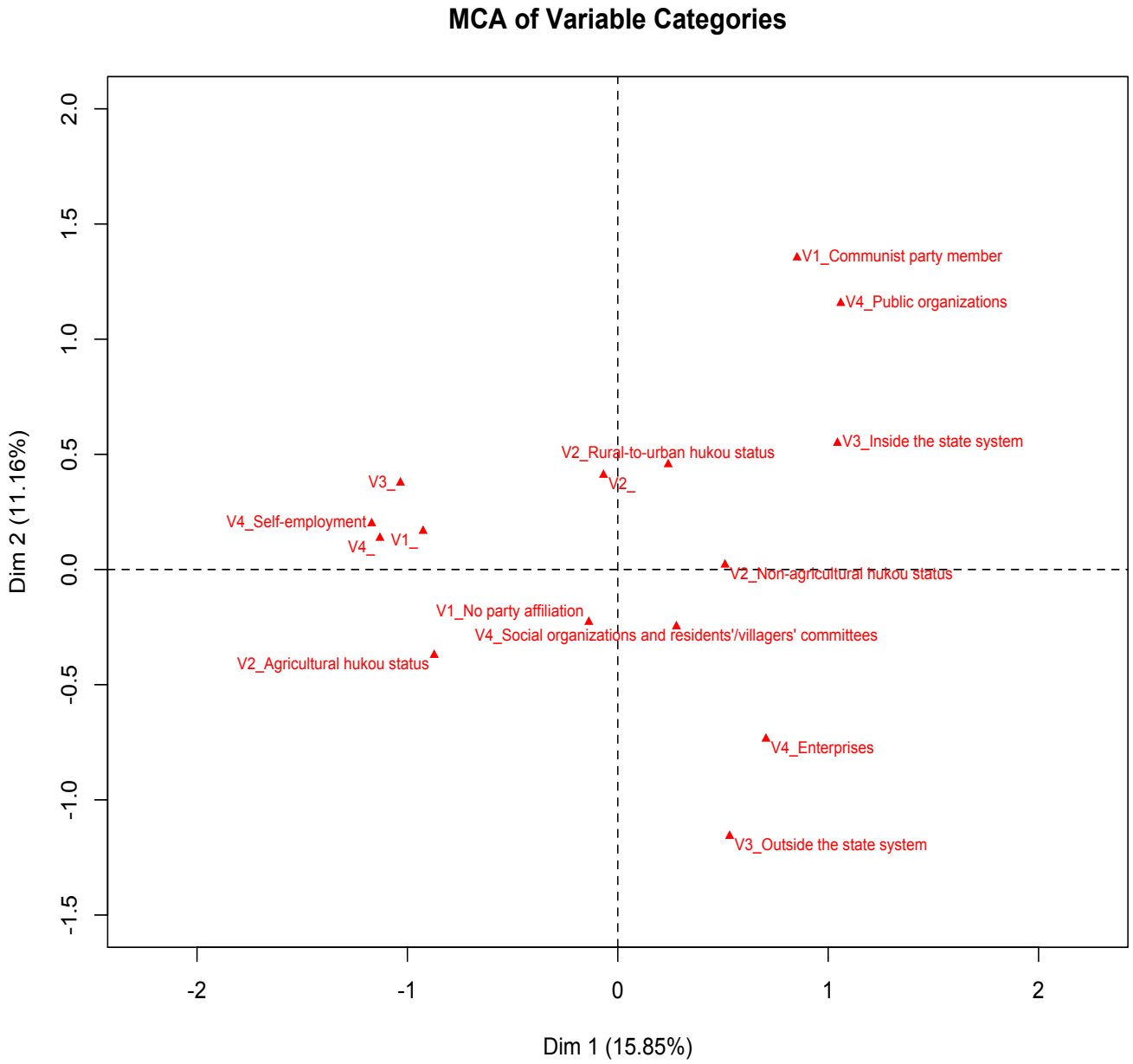


Figure 13: MCA map of symbolic categories: a symbolic configuration of urban society

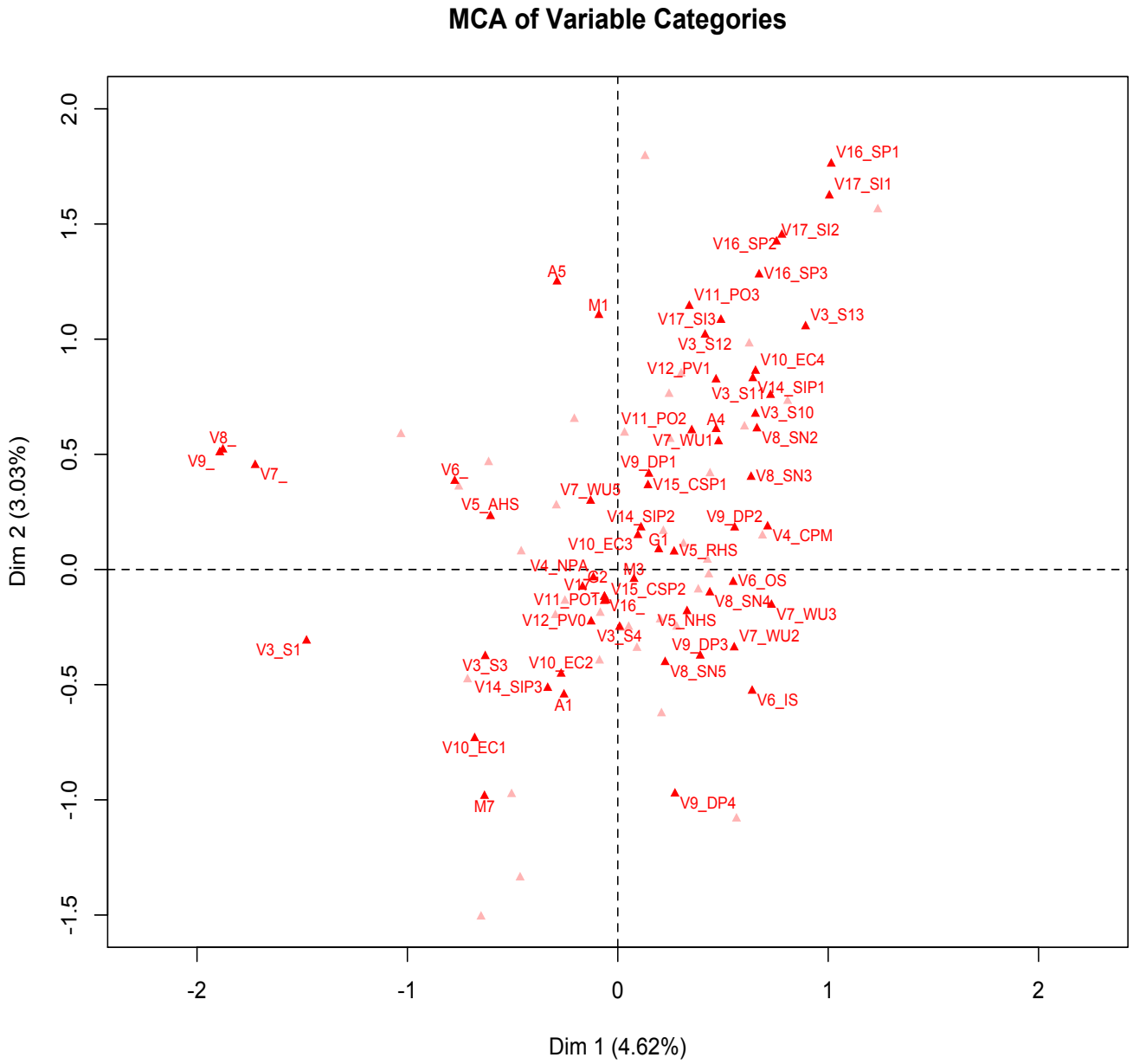


Figure 14: MCA map of all variable categories: an underlying structure of urban society

as urban residents originally registered under *hukou* status (RHS). Due to the effect of educational credentials on social mobility, it is likely that, compared to individuals who have been registered as urban residents since birth, the clusters of urban residents that attended higher levels of schooling are more likely to be highly positioned in their hierarchical structures.

The second quadrant (upper left) gives measures of a cloud of respondents who are typically characterized as agricultural *hukou* holders (AHS) involved with small individual businesses (WU5) in urban society. Usually, this cluster refers to "farmers-turned-workers" (technically described as rural to urban migrants) who moved from rural to urban areas for job opportunities without holding permanent urban residency. Although relatively marginalized in urban society, the class exists as a result of socioeconomic transformation and manifests as an emerging capitalist socioculture. The opposite quadrant (lower right) shows a cluster of respondents who don't feel change of socioeconomic position (CSP2) and are relatively weaker in power (DP3, SN4, SN5, WU2). The spatial association between response categories further indicates that this cluster is more likely to be identified as "working class" in cities. Meanwhile, these respondents are more gathered together as non-agricultural *hukou* holders (NHS). The close proximity of item WU2 and item IS tells a truth that lots of employees from state-owned or holding enterprises are categorized into the urban working class. An interesting finding is that, the distance to the center point explains a phenomenon that respondents employed inside the state-owned or holding enterprises are even more evidently recognized in the urban working class than respondents employed outside the state system (OS). Aside from this, even though located in the same quadrant, the distance between the response category of personnel employed inside the state system (IS) and other inequality variables displays less evident similarities. That is to say, the effect of employment status on defining a person's position in a social structure might be dependent on a variety of factors.

As a statistical technique, it is possible for MCA to describe the distributional features of urban residents by displaying the distribution of response categories. Seen from the shade of dark blue in Figure 15, the working class depicted by quadrant 4 (lower right) is identified as the mainstream group in contemporary urban China. Par-

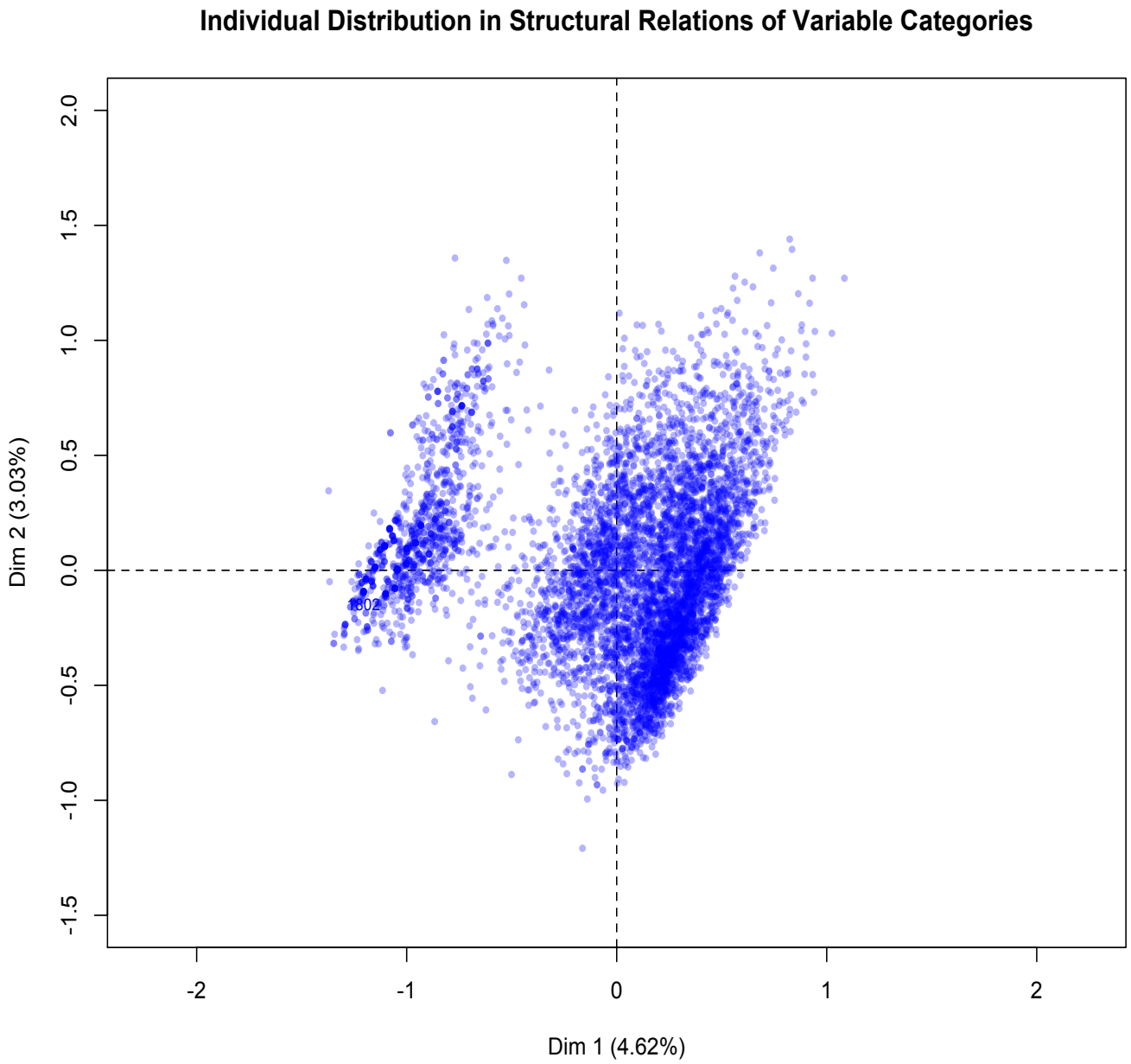


Figure 15: Distribution of urban samples in the MCA map of all variable categories

ticularly, the majority in urban society is featured as the salaried group with relatively weaker power living in average economic conditions. The shade of blue in quadrant 1 suggests the quick growth of the urban middle class whereas, corresponding to that, as shown by the marginalized groups distributed in quadrant 2 and 3.

To sum up the main findings, above are four clusters of response categories that I differentiate. The underlying structure for inequality in urban China can be shown via the spatial proximity of each variable category. In terms of the social hierarchy of socialist character, firstly, Communist Party members are more likely to be arranged in the urban middle class and above than non-Communist Party members. Being employed by the state system doesn't necessarily bring about positional advantages in the market-oriented society, except for cadres in party and government. Next, non-agricultural *hukou* holders (since birth) are distributed more in the urban working class or lower middle class. Correspondingly, agricultural *hukou* holders (rural to urban migrants) are relatively more marginalized and discriminated against in urban society. Last but not the least, even though it is not quite apparent, being a non-Communist Party member is a feature of marginalized groups in urban society. For middle class people and above, being party and government cadres contributes more to being in a higher socioeconomic position than being Communist Party members. The results also present a trend that, although the persisting socialist hierarchical arrangement inevitably exerts its force in constructing urban society, the influence is limited by the accelerating transformation. It is worth noting that the explanatory values of two axises are low in the urban case (see: Figure 13 and Figure 14). This is due to the fact that as a data analysis technique, MCA is not made to depict sociocultures in this case. In contrast to other instruments, however, it provides an approach to observe the socioculture by representing an underlying structure of a society.

5.3.2 Analysis of Inequality in Rural China

The results from the MCA on the same data set also reveal how China's rural society is stratified. From Figure 16 to Figure 18, we can see how categories of party affiliation, household registration (*hukou* status), and employment structure are distributed in rural China respectively. Compared to being in urban society, symbolic inequal-

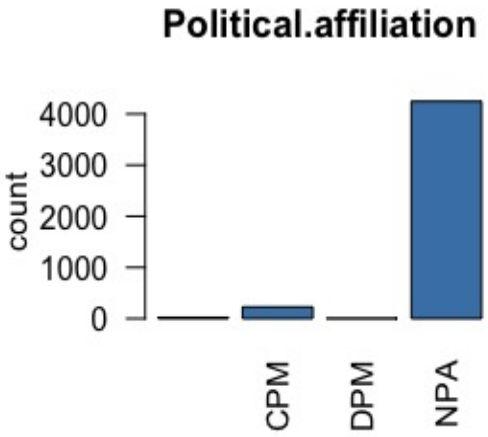


Figure 16: Distribution of party affiliation among rural samples

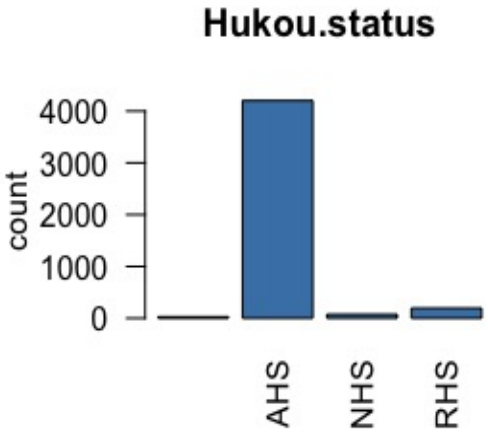
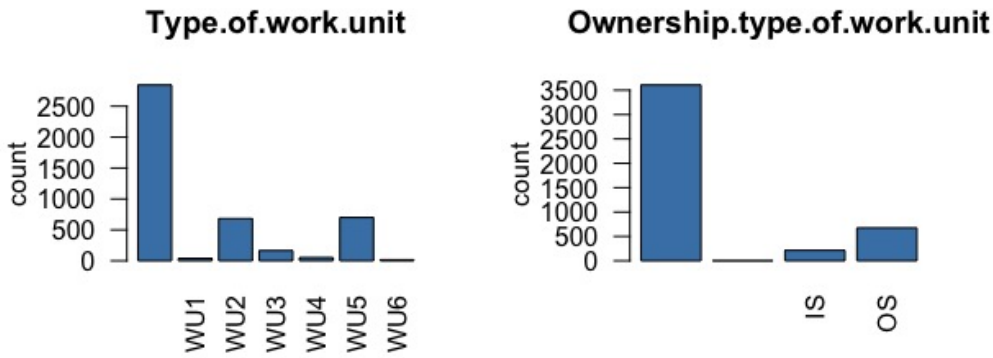


Figure 17: Distribution of *hukou* status among rural samples



(a) Distribution of work unit type among rural samples

(b) Distribution of ownership sector among rural samples

Figure 18: Distribution of being employed by the state system

Note: WU1+IS

ity of socialist character appears to be more apparent, which denotes a relatively less complicated social structure in these rural areas. It is evident that the majority of the rural population have been identified as the symbolically underprivileged groups (i.e., agricultural *hukou* holders, non-Communist Party members, and non-state system personnel). Shown in Figure 20 is the correlation between 19 variables. The MCA principle dimensions of gender, political affiliation, and social network are most correlated with the first dimension that explain the largest variation in the rural data set; Meanwhile, the variables social influence and prestige, relative socioeconomic position (self-identified), change of socioeconomic position, acquaintance with neighbors, and property ownership are most correlated with the second dimensions that explains the second largest variation.

Figure 21 demonstrates the symbolic configuration of rural social structure. It is evident that, in rural China, the socialist socioculture is solid, and has given rise to class division lines between the socialist class system and the emerging class. The privileged class, located in quadrant 1 (upper right), not only shows strong integration of the party and the administration (including the army system), but also exhibits the institutional advantages of non-agricultural *hukou* status in rural society (compared to the underprivileged position of agricultural *hukou* status shown in the lower left oppo-

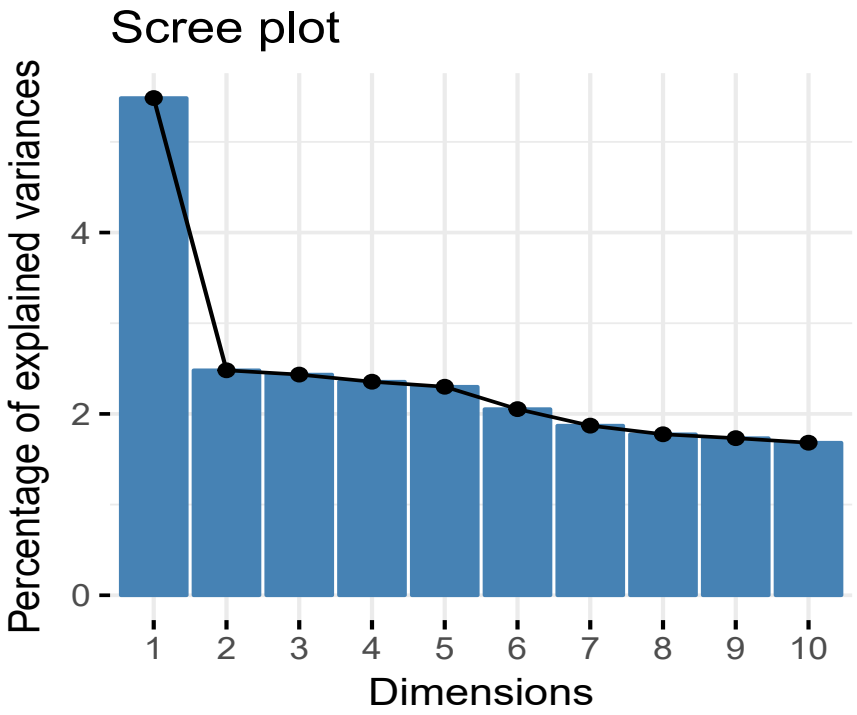


Figure 19: Percentages of inertia explained by the MCA dimensions: based on rural samples

site quadrant). Quadrant 4 (lower right) describe an emerging class that appears to be the rural middle class after transformation. On the contrary, those in the self-employed in individual business category, displayed in upper left quadrant 2, have been relatively marginalized during the transformation. Seen as the results of capitalist transformation, variables shown in these two quadrant virtually reveal how liberalization comes into being and grows in rural China.

Next, as an extension of Figure 21, Figure 22 presents an overall picture of the structural root of inequality in rural society via the analysis of more variable categories. Quadrant 1 (upper right) depicts a more privileged class in rural areas. Being employed in public organizations (WU3) is found to be one of the most prominent features of this class. Non-agricultural *hukou* holders (NHS, RHS) and hired inside the state system (IS) respondents show some similarities. Particularly in terms of the IS item, the distance from the central point indicates that the WU3 item (public organization employee) is a more conspicuous trait of the rural privileged class, than WU4 (cadre in villagers' committees) and CPM (Communist Party member). The distance of CPM and WU4 thus gives a visible measure of similarity. Aside from this, respon-

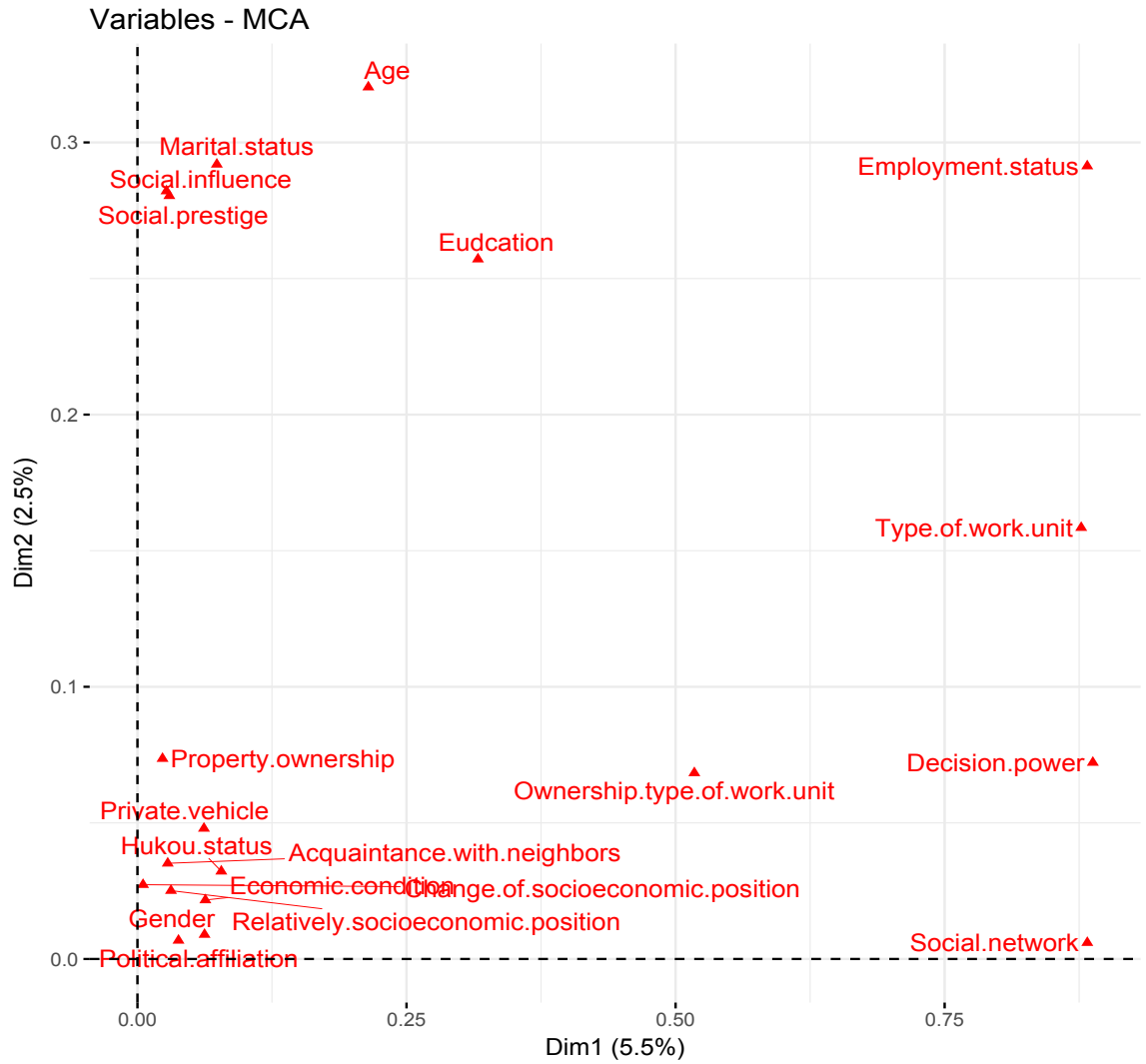


Figure 20: Correlation between variables and MCA principle dimensions: based on rural samples

dents who are/were involved with non-agricultural work outside the state system (OS) also belong to this cluster. Essentially, quadrant 1 illustrates that this class gains positional advantages under the socialist hierarchical system. The interesting result is that, however, none of the indicators related to economic condition are visible in this quadrant. On the contrary, the opposite quadrant 3 (lower left) demonstrates the very underprivileged class in rural society characterized by its lower educational level (S3) and in agricultural work (and never in non-agricultural work, ES3). It is not surprising that, no non-agricultural work experience is the biggest feature of this cluster.

Quadrant 2 (upper left) captures such a group with a relatively lower self-identified socioeconomic position (SIP3) rating in rural society who are demographically characterized to be at elder age (A1) and a very low educational level (S1). Symbolically, respondents in this quadrant were originally born with agricultural *hukou* status (AHS), and are non-Communist Party members (NPA). For the jobless (ES4) however, these relationships with AHS and NPA are not fairly apparent among this group members. A completely opposite picture of quadrant 2 is demonstrated in quadrant 4 (lower right), which describes the characteristics of an emerging class in rural China. With regard to those respondents who identify themselves in a middle socioeconomic position (SIP2), although unrelated to redistribution power, they are self-established in a better economic condition (PV1, PO2, EC4) and social network (SN2). It can be observed that the cluster of these response categories primarily consists of individuals who are, or were, in non-agricultural work (ES1, ES2), particularly engaged in individual business (WU5), and were born in a reforming period (born after 1970s, A3).

The distribution of respondents shown in Figure 23 further reveals the fundamental structure of rural society. The shade of dark blue covers a series of traits of mainstream class, among which includes the feature of being at an older age implying that younger people are more willing to seek for opportunities in cities. In the meantime, non-agricultural work is increasingly facilitating the improvement of economic conditions, leading to the emergence of a wealthy class in rural areas. Due to the fact that socio-cultures are too complex to be depicted by MCA, the explanatory values of the two axises are low in the rural case (see: Figure 21 and Figure 22). Apart from this, it is worth noting that the positional advantages of socialist symbolic capital appear to be

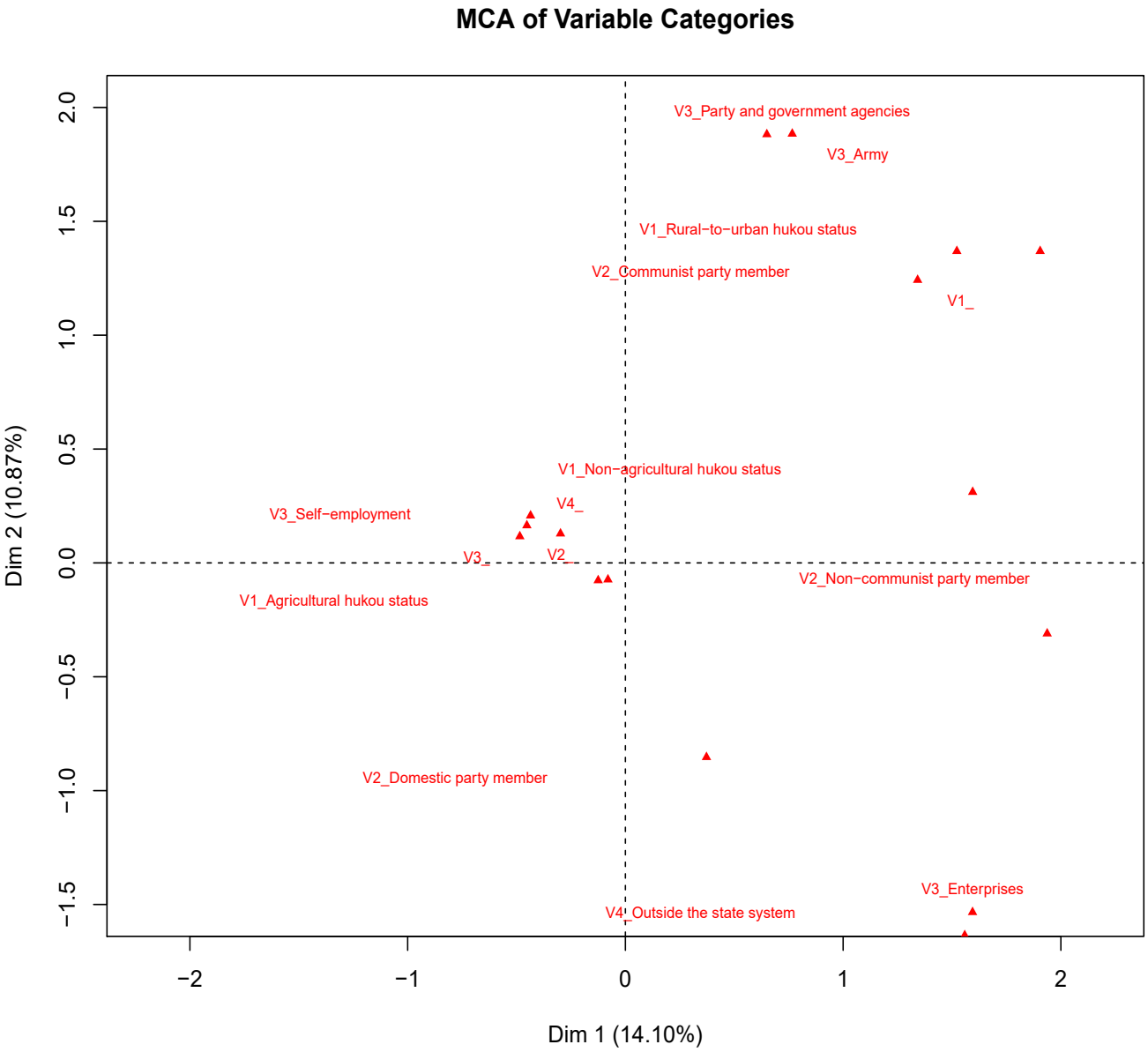


Figure 21: MCA map of symbolic categories: a symbolic configuration of rural society

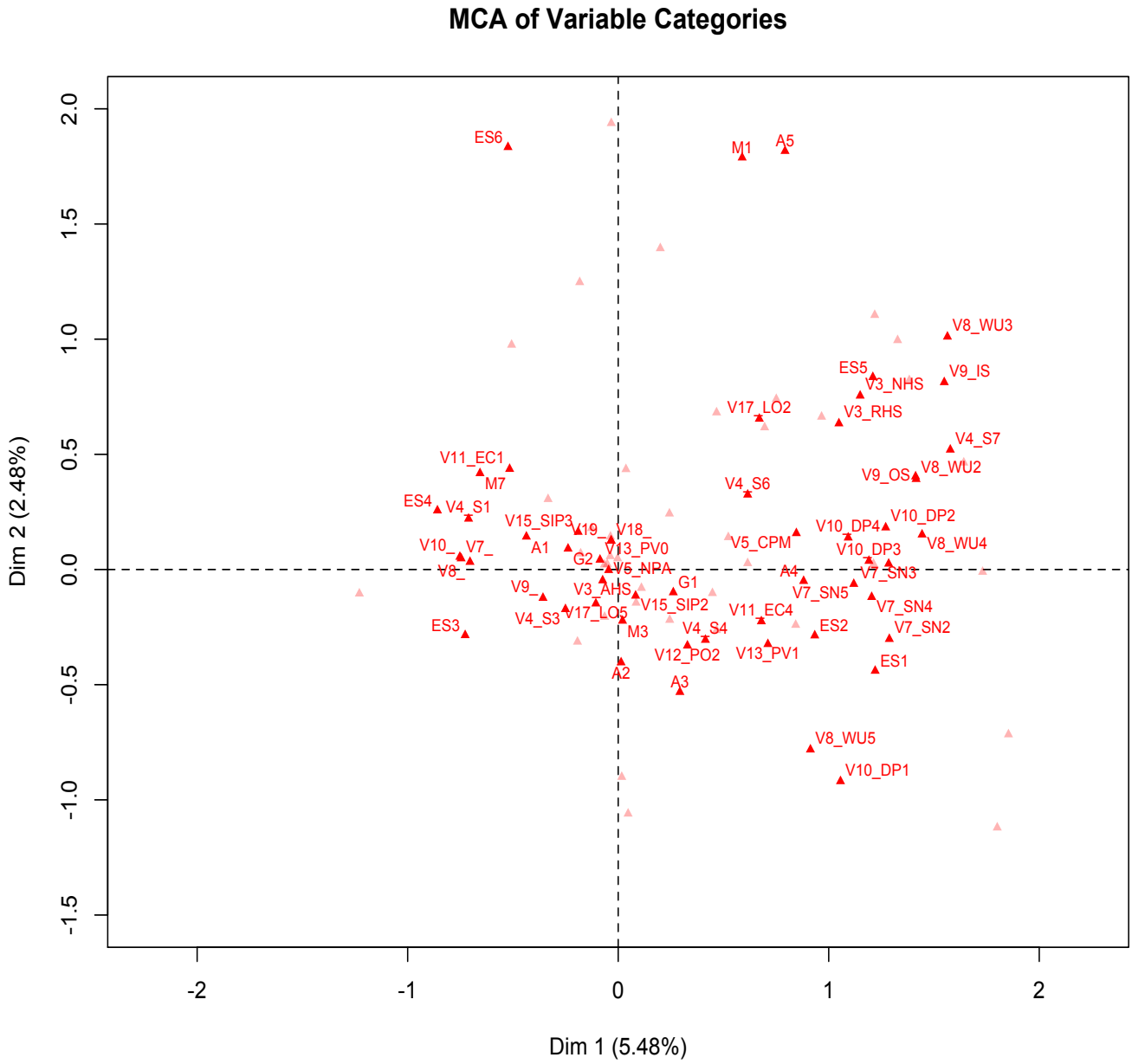


Figure 22: MCA map of all variable categories: an underlying structure of rural society

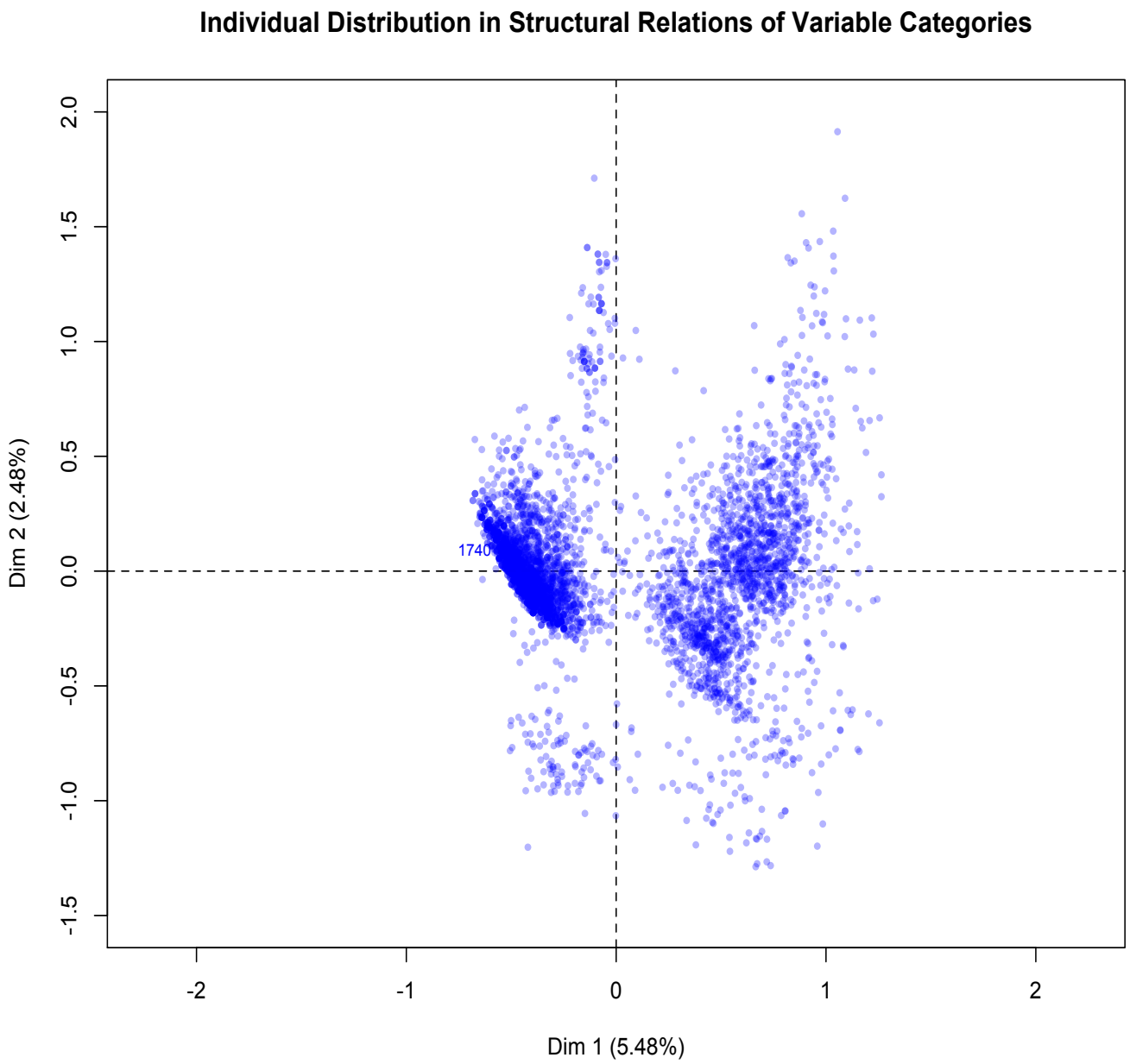


Figure 23: Distribution of rural samples in the MCA map of all variable categories

more significant in defining the rural than the urban social structure.

6 A Qualitative Illustration: Habitus and Its Contribution to Inequality in Today's China

The mixed methods research employed in this study combines quantitative and qualitative research methods sequentially (e.g., findings from one approach inform the other; Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). As revealed by the quantitative research in chapter 5, the status-quo of inequality has been found to be, to some extent, reproduced from the class system under state socialism. This reproduction of the class distinctions under state socialism makes the status quo of inequality appear natural, explaining why humans perceive inequality under reform as just and proper. I therefore propose a sociocultural mechanism to examine how the reproduction of inequality happens. As delivered in chapter 4, the socioculture is hypothesized to be the relevant habitus (or practice tendency) that exist with some legacies of socialist hierarchies. Inequality in today's China is thus presumed to be determined by the distribution of habitus triats, which is anchored in the persisting socialist hierarchies.

Due to market transformation under the socialist political system, the sociocultural framework is presupposed to be understood either as awareness of the socialist redistribution system, or as awareness of the liberal market. This chapter introduces a qualitative view to develop a sociocultural understanding of the reproduction of inequality. Through the operationalization of habitus and by conducting a series of in-depth interviews, it was found that the maintenance of habitus acquired from the socialist hierarchical systems is an invisible mechanism for reproducing inequality. First, in both rural and urban societies, human habitus is, to some extent but not fully, symbolically mediated by the socialist hierarchical legacies. Second, the capitalist habitus type differs from the socialist practice tendency, which explains the dividing line between the privileged class and the emerging affluent class in rural China. Next, the urban middle (including upper middle class) class has developed out from the practice of occupying state power and/or market share. The working class in urban China is categorized into two subclasses: marginalized working class derived from economic

liberalization and urban working class formed of the urban worker group within the earlier cadre-worker dichotomy. In other words, the middle (including upper middle) class and the working class in urban society are joint products of both socialist and capitalist logics of practice.

Finally, in both rural and urban society, being a member of the lower classes is linked to feelings of deprivation and exclusion. To sum up, inequality in today's China is reproduced and accepted to be just, even if the earlier socialist logic of practice remains unconscious and invisible.

6.1 Habitus and Its Operationalization

6.1.1 Habitus and Inequality in Today's China

The habitus theory derived from the sociocultural perspective will be adopted to explain how the configuration of inequality is informed under China's reform. Defined by Pierre Bourdieu, habitus depicts the internalized behavioral tendency of humans, learned from certain fields, which organize the practice modes of individuals cognitively, without intentional calculation (Bourdieu, 1989, 1990b). With regard to the reproduction of inequality, habitus not only tends to repeat certain behavioral patterns, but also unconsciously encourages individuals to seek conditions which are consistent with its regeneration (see also: Jodhka et al., 2017). In this sense, human habitus signifies individual merit, which reveals the structural root of inequality in a meritocratic society.

As an internalized practice mode, in this case, habitus reproduction explains how social class is reproduced from a planned social system to a relatively autonomous one. Therefore, the distribution of habitus that determines inequality under reform is assumed to be partly compatible with the hierarchical system under the state-socialism system. Based upon the underlying social structure of both urban and rural China revealed in chapter 5, capitalist characteristics seem to be integrated into the socialist milieus. This sociocultural amalgam is expected to reveal various habitus types, with the socialist habitus reproducing itself from the state-socialist class system while the capitalist habitus develops out of economic liberalism. To be concrete, human practice of the state-socialist model signifies individuals tending to act in compliance with

the rules within the hierarchical system of redistribution. On the contrary, capitalist habitus means that a human will tend to act as he/she has learned from the forces of supply and demand. Habitus traits are assumed to refelct differences in access to the market, a quality that has been framed as meritorious by the state in China's reform. I therefore presuppose following sociocultural frameworks that associate habitus with inequality:

(1) Habitus traits acquired through the socialist tradition and valued in a transforming society are distributed in both rural and urban advantaged classes in a concentrated manner.

(2) Habitus traits acquired through the socialist tradition and less valued in a transforming society are distributed in both rural and urban marginalized classes in a concentrated manner.

(3) Habitus traits acquired in liberal market are distributed in both rural and urban emerging classes in a concentrated manner, and sparsely distributed in other social classes.

Institutionalized through ideological tradition and policies, habitus types of socialist traits are regarded to be related to individual tendencies to address the system of inequality from an earlier time. Transformation, in fact, conditionally brings about changes in human practice: On one hand, there still remain policies that discriminate against underprivileged groups to equally access some social resources. On the other hand, these hierarchical systems are arranged in a more flexible way, which means individuals are allowed to conditionally switch their positions within the structural systems. For instance, it is possible for original agricultural *hukou* holders to obtain non-agricultural *hukou* status via several approaches (e.g., employment, school attendance, entrepreneurship, etc.). Another example is that both regular opening recruitment and voluntary resignation have been institutionalized by the personnel management of the state system (see also: Chou, 2007). These changes in liberalization suggest that a new common practice has been acquired and then incorporated as an stable behavioral pattern by a large number of people. Basically, as a result of the economic liberalization, upward mobility has been allowed, and even facilitated, in the

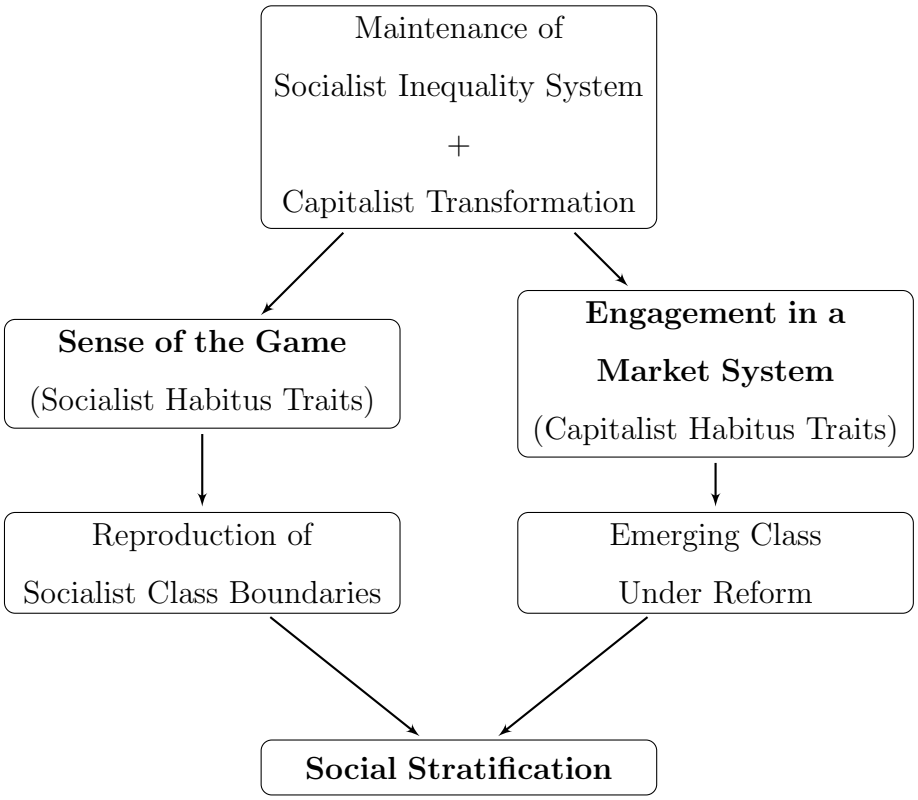


Figure 24: How social inequality comes into being under China's reform

framework of the socialist hierarchical system.

Since individuals have been legally granted market opportunities in China, an understanding of such a habitus requires an emphasis on two things: First, how human habitus types develop out of a hybrid of a socialist political system and a market economy; Second, due to the emergence of free competition, a human doesn't necessarily develop a sense of the socialist hierarchies. The former examines the form and the extent to which the socialist system of inequality is reproduced under reform, and the latter concerns the emerging social class. Figure 24 illustrates how this configuration of inequality is informed.

6.1.2 The Operationalization of Habitus

The operationalization of habitus, which forms the foundation for constructing habitus types, which is insufficient in Bourdieu's theory (see also: Jodhka et al., 2017). Usually, operationalization is considered one of the most significant facets in social science research, for both quantitative and qualitative investigation. In quantitative research,

operationalization is the process of creating scales or indicators to calculate the extent to which abstract concepts exist, on the basis of concretizing the meaning of said concepts (Berg, 2001; VanderStoep & Johnson, 2008). Similarly, qualitative study is aimed at concretizing the meaning of a concept in relation to a given context and exploring how that concept is to be identified (Berg, 2001).

In terms of the operationalization of habitus in the present study, two things must be theoretically established: First, what specific behaviors are associated with social stratification under China's reform? Second, how will these behavioral variables be examined? The first suggests the concrete aspects of habitus that are revealed as significant and are unequally distributed, while the second reflects an attempt to construct habitus types. Since Weberian stratification is used to approach the investigation of inequality, the observed behaviors are expected to relate to the achievements of economic condition, social status and power. In the CGSS 2015, for example, the following items are relevant and crucial to the qualitative interviews:

- Cognitive ability
- Social interaction
- Self-discipline[30]
- Adaptation to market system[31]
- Attitude toward the future

Theoretically, the above items are assumed to be responsible for explaining what habitus means, because in a transforming society, people are differently aware of the

[30]Here I apply self-discipline rather than self-regulation to the qualitative interview design. According to scholars' work, self-regulation is studied to be a part of cognitive processes and makes more emphasis on strategy use. In contrast, self-discipline focuses on "performance processes designed to cope with learning problems" (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2014, p.146). In particular, self-discipline signifies human ability of having self-control over ones attitudes and behaviors in order to maintain intention and impulsivity during problem solving (Salami, 2010; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2014).

[31]With regard to this item, I encourage interviewees to talk about their perception and experience of stock and property deals, as these two deals are the most common and touchable investment activities in China.

market-based institutions and make choices in the above aspects differently, in such a way that corresponds to their intrinsic understanding of surroundings. Portrayed as the human ability to perform mental activities, cognitive ability is addressed by scholars to predict human decision making (e.g., Dohmen, Falk, Huffman, & Sunde, 2010; Benjamin, Brown, & Shapiro, 2013). The emphasis on cognitive ability further reminds me of introducing humans' interaction in interviews. As intensively social creatures, from the perspective of neuroscience, humans engage in social interactions in order to recognize objects and to grasp them (Singer, Wolpert, & Frith, 2004). In the domain of social psychology and education, self-discipline anticipates academic ability and development for the future, albeit more modestly, as it affirms the role of conscious efforts during problem-solving (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2014). Adaptation to the market system is utilized to observe an individual's processes for making socioeconomic decisions. Attitude toward the future is relevant in two aspects: one concerning self-confidence in one's ability, which generally enhances personal motivation (Bénabou & Tirole, 2002); the other concerning satisfaction with policies and the current life situation.

The second step of conceptual operationalization is identifying the term "habitus" by the measurement of the above 5 variable items. The measurement indicators maintain the essential elements of each concrete aspect of habitus, which can be transformed into habitus traits in transforming societies. An understanding of one's habitual language use and use of media and social media is necessary to examine cognitive ability. Language use has been shown to contribute to thinking patterns that concern memory strategies during problem-solving (e.g., Pederson, 1995). Media and social media consumption as stimuli effectively gives rise to human perception of social reality, and further reveal his/her underlying information processing and social cognition abilities (Shrum, 2009). The operational definition of social interaction, self-discipline, and adaptation towards market system make these items easier to measure. Given that, I identify social interaction through the observation of how an individual organizes the manner and the frequency of his/her social interactions. Self-discipline can therefore be examined through the use of leisure time and sense of responsibility toward labour endeavors, because these two factors signify people's attitudes towards problem-solving

in their daily work and life. Likewise, personal investment activity can be viewed as a crucial indicator for examining whether an individual is getting used to the market system. For the last item, attitude towards the future, the measurement concerns two aspects: confidence in one's own ability and confidence in the state system. The two establishments shown in Table 7 combine to build a theoretical foundation in habitus type construction.

Table 7: Concrete aspects of habitus and the measurements

Concrete Aspects of Habitus	**How the Item is Examined**
Cognitive Ability	Habitual language use; Media and social media consumption.
Social Interaction	Manner; Frequency; Contacts, etc.
Self-Discipline	The use of leisure time; Sense of responsibility; Motivation of problem-solving.
Adaptation to Market System	Personal investment activity; Attitude towards risk-taking.
Attitude toward the Future	Self-confidence in one's own ability; Confidence in policies.

6.2 Data Collection and Documentary Method

This study constructs ideal habitus types on the basis of data collected from qualitative interviews, and applies these habitus types in order to trace how inequality is reflected in socioculture. Scholars tend to apply a more hermeneutic perspective in order to understand Bourdieu's theory of practice (Kogler, 1997; Crossley, 2001). Hence, in accordance with Jodhka et al. (2017), the "documentary method" (Bohnsack, 2014) is used in this qualitative analysis. Up to the present, the documentary method has covered a great variety of social science subjects, and has been adopted for the interpre-

tation of varies kinds of text, including semi-structured interviews. In this qualitative research, this method is used to construct "elementary categories" of human habitus under China's reform, and to trace how habitus contributes to the reproduction of inequality in today's China. This section introduces how data is collected from the semi-structured interviews and understood by the documentary method, which will set the stage for the later interpretation of "habitus."

6.2.1 Qualitative Interview Design and Data Collection

As summarized by Gall, Borg, and Gall (2003), there are three mainstream formats for interview design that allow researchers to obtain thick and rich data: (a) the informal conversational interview; (b) the general interview guide approach; and (c) the standardized open-ended interview. This empirical study attempts to use the general interview guide approach. The general interview guide approach provides a clear focus on particular topics, while still allowing for a degree of adaptability and flexibility in obtaining information from the interviewees (e.g., Turner III, 2010). In other words, the general interview guide approach is semi-structured and gives the interviewer much more leeway for following up and, therefore, a greater chance of being made visible as a knowledge-producing participant than would be the case in a more structured interview and it provides more focus than would be found in an unstructured interview (Turner III, 2010; Brinkman, 2013). This, in addition to the predetermined questions that focus on the perspective of interviewees, interviewers are always permitted to probe beyond their own questions to get at the full story (Berg, 2001).

The commonly accepted procedures (see: Berg, 2001; Warren, 2002; Turner III, 2010) for conducting qualitative interviews mainly include[32]:

- Preparing the interview schedule, which is required for researchers to have clear ideas about the information they want to access and to process. This can be further broken down into:
    - Determining the type of interview (e.g., telephone interviews, one-on-one interviews, group screening interviews, etc.)

[32]The particular steps are self-elaborated based on the principles recommended in relevant literature, see: Berg (2001), Creswell (2007), and Turner III (2010).

- Selecting the appropriate interviewees
- Pilot testing (if necessary)

- Developing the interview schedule, which relates to meaning-making and deals with the interview process (Warren, 2002). This can be further broken down into:
  - Designing an interview protocol
  - Developing interview questions, (namely demographic information, essential questions, and extra questions)
- Implementing of the interview, which entails the collection of data.

The qualitative interviews in this dissertation are designed and conducted in accordance with the principles and the procedures elaborated above. This interview is aimed at defining habitus type and further figuring out how habitus traits contribute to the reproduction of inequality under China's reform. The target of this research is fixed based on the quantitative results revealed in chapter 5 that the status-quo of China's inequality is to some extent reproduced from the hierarchal system under state socialism, in both rural and urban society. I have therefore conducted qualitative interviews based on urban and rural residential areas respectively, and have utilized one-on-one, face-to-face interviews. Below are the significant processes of this qualitative interview:

Finding participants In the logic of the particular target of this qualitative interview, participants could be selected based upon a priori research design (quantitative results) and then sought out to act as key informants. For one-on-one interviewing, it is effective to find individuals who are not hesitant to share ideas and to speak (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, all participants are selected voluntarily, in order to make the conversational settings as neutral as possible.

In the urban social structure investigation, participants are chosen based on the symbolic and socioeconomic characteristics that were revealed in chapter 5. I therefore interviewed: a rural-to-urban migrant worker, a senior engineer in private enterprise, a full professor in public university, a worker in state-holding enterprise, a worker laid off from state-owned enterprise, a civil servant in a party agency, an individual

entrepreneur, an express delivery man in private logistics company, a technician in private enterprise, and a private entrepreneur.

Likewise, participants were selected and voluntarily interviewed in the rural social structure investigation. I therefore interviewed: two village cadres (of different *hukou* statuses), a village cadre who was a entrepreneur, an individual entrepreneur, two peasants, and a traditional Chinese physician.

Designing protocol A brief protocol was designed in the Chinese language for introducing this interview to the participants. The protocol was aimed at helping the participants to understand the following questions: who is the interviewer? what is the goal of this research project? why was the interviewee selected? The participants were then informed they would be recorded, but would remain anonymous in the project report.

Developing interview questions The following items, and the yielded questions, were then developed:

- Demographic characteristics: What is your gender, age, education level, religion, marital status, occupation, etc.?
- Symbolic capital of socialist character: What is your political affiliation, household registration status, and position in ownership sector?
- Personal experience[33] and family background: Could you please describe your personal experience, your family background, and your relatives?
- Cognitive ability: How often did you use Mandarin or dialect during your early development and how often do you use it now in your daily life? How familiar are you with English? Can you talk about the media and social media you often use?

[33]Classic behavioral perspective regards personal experience as a particularly powerful stimulus to humans' actions (Weinstein, 1989). Performed to be more individual-specific, the personal experience should be fundamentally integrated into the analysis of humans' behavioral choices, even if the action concerns the tendency rooted in a milieus.

- Social interactions: Please talk about the people you interact most and the kinds of interaction entailed.
- Self-discipline: Could you talk about how you spend your leisure time? Please describe the way you feel about your job.
- Adaptation to market system: Do you have any personal investment activities? What do you think about investment activities?
- Attitude toward the future: Are you optimistic about the future? Please explain your outlook.
- Economic condition: Please describe your economic condition and financial situation.
- Social status: How would you describe the social status of your occupation?
- Power: Please talk about your social network and the decision power allotted to your work organization.
- Self-assessment: How would you assess your position within society as a whole?

Implementing the interview The recording pen and some relevant materials were prepared before the interview. While doing the interview, the circumstances, physical and mental status of the interviewees, appearances, utterances, micro-expressions, and actions were observed. All apparently relevant information was tracked and transformed to compose the qualitative data. A series of developed interview questions were asked in such a way as to ensure interviewee comprehension. Some interviewees were more talkative during the interview, leading to thicker and richer data. Others, however, were more likely to be the question-guided respondents. In the latter cases, developed questions served as the initial questions for opening the door to an issue, and probes, or follow-up questions, were used to get the respondents to dig deeper. For interviewees that tend to answer questions in an abbreviated ways, it is necessary to clarify what they mean, before proceeding on to the details, thoughts, and feelings of the interviewees. For example, the question "Please describe your economic condition

and financial situation." An interaction with such a respondent may look something like this:

Q: Please describe your economic condition and financial situation.

A: Just the average level.

Probe1: It sounds like you are not very satisfied with your economic condition, is that a fair summary? (for the confirmation of respondent's subjective meaning)

Probe2: How many real estate properties do you own? Do you have your own vehicle? Do you have any financial problems? Are you satisfied with your savings?

While the interviewer works to extract substantial answers, respondents may provide important visual and verbal cues, for instance, hesitation or excitement, which may reveal something about the interviewer that goes beyond the verbal report alone. In such instances, it is necessary to ask follow-up questions in order to motivate and facilitate to reveal the thoughts behind these cues (see also: Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004).

Furthermore, some unanticipated events may occur during interviews that become challenges for the interviewing process. Such challenges may arise as a result of participant behaviors and reactions not anticipated by the interviewer, highly sensitive questions and topics (see: Roulston, DeMarrais, & Lewis, 2003). With the purpose of keeping the interview going in such situations, I utilized the strategy of reorganizing questions so they might feel more acceptable to the respondents, or switching the focus of the interview questions relative to the client's apparent emotional responsivity. Unanticipated events can serve an important role in the interview process for understanding the experiences of interviewees. Following the audio recording, any other relevant information was noted for later processing.

6.2.2 Documentary Method

The documentary method is utilized in the analysis of the interview data in this dissertation, because documentary interpretation has been revealed to be an effective tool for understanding human habitus (Bohnsack, 2010, 2014). Functionally, this method approaches not only the narrative that is verbally and explicitly communicated in the

interview, but helps with the reconstruction of the subjective meanings that underline utterances or actions (Nohl, 2010). It is intended to help the researcher to observe a form of social action that is incorporated in the body of the individual subject. Such social actions form practice patterns, which describes the "frame of orientation" of a respondent. As synonym for the term "habitus," "frame of orientation" helps to remind us that habitus is a generative, rather than determined, concept (Lovell, 2003; Bohnsack, 2014).

The affinity between habitus and frame of orientation has been discussed by Bohnsack, who further distinguishes conjunctive knowledge, which refers to an orientation of human practical action from communicative knowledge, or the level of knowledge. This distinction helps to show us how the way to access an understanding of the human logic of practice that is indexed by their utterances. That is to say that the communicative-conjunctive dual structure of knowledge allows us to perceive which actions correspond to what forms of knowledge the respondents draw from (see also: Bohnsack, 2014). Technically, communicative knowledge concerns rule-guided actions and corresponds to standardization. Canale (1987) explained that the sphere of knowledge, from the perspective of applied linguistics, that communicative knowledge represents is of the grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse-related competencies. Serving as an orientation for practice action, conjunctive knowledge particularly describes the knowledge that results from prior experience (or memory) rather than from rules and regulations (Bohnsack, 2014). The frame of action generated by conjunctive knowledge is the embodied practice pattern called habitus, as prior knowledge is found to dominate the logical form, and to facilitate learning (Pazzani, 1991). To be concrete, in terms of the topic of inequality, conjunctive knowledge doesn't correspond to a set of explicit rules in a hierarchical system, but rather generates power that maintains its implicit meaning through the sense of structural relations situated in a given context. Based upon Bohnsack's description of the documentary method, this conception has allowed researchers to better interpret through their qualitative data what habitus is and how habitus works through implicit frames of orientation constructed by access to conjunctive knowledge.

Three steps of documentary method are outlined in this practical empirical analy-

sis: transcription, formulating interpretation, and reflecting interpretation (see also: Bohnsack, 2014). Transcription concerns the first step: data preparation. There are some principles or considerations that help researchers to systematically organize textual data, even if the transcription format has not been technically standardized (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). Many scholars usually agree that for developing transcription, it is required to preserve word form and text structure, to keep the information complete and easy to learn, and to maintain the text independent of researchers or third parties (Mergenthaler & Stinson, 1992; McLellan et al., 2003). Formulating interpretation is aimed at decoding and emphasizing interviewees' explicit meanings within the context of what they have literally said. The formulated explicit documentary meaning virtually explains what has been discussed, and discourse topic is rather detached from "in which framework the topic is dealt with" (Bohnsack, 2014, p.225). Built upon the organization of discourse, reflecting interpretation is in attempt to particularly explore which frameworks of orientation (or habitus) generate human practice patterns. Put another way, instead of producing definitive institutionalized actions, reflecting interpretation is utilized to reveal internalized interpretative practice from implicit knowledge represented in narrations and descriptions.

6.3 Qualitative Data Analysis: Construction of Habitus Types

This part attempts to find out the particular habitus types that are argued to be relevant to the distribution of symbolic capital. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, each period before and after the 1978 transformation has signified a hypothetical socioculture that can be further distinguished into various habitus types. Instead of organizing group discussions to construct habitus types at the group-level, this empirical investigation is designed to focus on the perspective of individuals for constructing collective implicit knowledge in a transforming context. The challenge that I face in this task is the construction of group-based habitus from individual-level qualitative interview data. Representative individual samples, thus, are selected for analysis in order to demonstrate the methodological solutions of this qualitative study. More specifically, addressed by the results of the quantitative investigation in chapter 5, the configuration of China's inequality has given rise to characteristics representative

of each social class, which denotes that habitus types could be organized by clustering in a multiple correspondence analysis similar to the approach often taken in research related to social class construction. In a nod to some existing work (e.g., Jodhka et al., 2017), "elementary categories" are identified from practical actions and utterance of interviewees in order to characterize habitus. Combined with theoretical considerations and statistical results, the embodied dispositions developed from reflecting interpretation help to provide a picture of habitus types in China.

6.3.1 Habitus Types in Rural Society

In order to construct habitus types in rural society, I present interviewee profiles and selected text from interviews below:

Interviewee I is a village cadre with agricultural *hukou* status who joined the Communist Party in 1997. Born in Ruanwan village (a less developed village of the Hubei province in middle China) in 1965, he became a rural-to-urban migrant worker after senior high school, and returned to the village in 1995. He has served as deputy secretary of his village committee since 1999. My interview with him was implemented in his well organized office. During the interview, the cadre responded cautiously, in a rather logical way with a strong dialectal accent. To the questions about everyday practice, he expressed in the interview that:

> *"I speak in this dialect in my daily life and in my work, and I can only speak very basic English. I don't have other business, and we are always overworked because too much work is imposed on us. Due to increasing civil service work, there is only one day off in a week. I even don't have extra time to meet up with friends. I am more interested in political news than other kinds of news. Like other indigenous villagers, I am insured by the social security system rather than by commercial insurance, because the economy is weak here. Even through I am a village cadre and much better paid than other villagers, I don't have other ways to earn money or to invest in properties and stocks. I believe the collective economy plays a more significant role than fund appropriations in village development. However,*

I am still confident about the future, because, as approved by the latest policies, the Hubei International Logistics Hub will be built nearby. Cadres serve the people, and the decisions by village committees are all made based upon opinions of the villagers. I am too old to start up a business, I would like to take care of my family and to do some agricultural work after my retirement."

Interviewee II is a village cadre who is of rural-to-urban *hukou* status. She joined the Communist Party in 2004. Due to Land Requisition, her original agricultural *hukou* status was transformed to non-agricultural status in 2004. Born in 1968, this cadre is married and has a son serving in the Army. With a middle school education level, she serves as director of the women's committee in a well developed village in east China. Before being officially appointed as a village cadre, she had approximately ten-year experience in non-agricultural work, which greatly increased her revenue. We had a conversation in her office. The interview was always interrupted a number of times by the phone calls concerning her job. She explained:

"I spoke in my local dialect when I was young, but I learned to speak Mandarin at school and have been getting used to speaking Mandarin as a result of dealing with non-locals. Before officially becoming a cadre, I was a construction contractor. I was a hard job but with a high pay rate. In recent years, we have been quite busy in the project of cultural and ethnic progress. I don't have leisure time. I would tell you I worked over 12 hours almost every day in the last week. Since my job concerns family planning, my team and I are closely connected and have frequent interactions with gynecologists in cities to help women to solve their relevant problems. The cadre work was easier to do in the past years, but now it is getting harder. Knowledge and information technology increasingly play an important role in daily work and communication. I am trying to keep studying, but some computer skills are still too hard for me to master. Due to the land requisition, lots of manufacturing enterprises have been established nearby, increasing floating populations here and encouraging me and other villagers to rent out our

properties to migrant workers. I am satisfied with the rental yield. I believe it is getting better: all indigenous villagers are non-agricultural hukou *holders now, which means they have definitely benefited from urban-biased policies."*

Interviewee III is a traditional Chinese physician serving in a public hospital located in an urban area. Born in 1984, the physician is an agricultural *hukou* holder with a three-year specialized college degree. I was told by the physician that it was due to the close relationship in rural neighborhood communities that encouraged him to settle in a rural area rather than in city. We had a nice conversation in his clean and well-organized office. The interviewee looked excited when the subject of China's medical industry came up:

"Both of my parents are peasants and less educated, but they are self-disciplined and strict to my elder sister and I. My parents are also holding conservative beliefs regarding patriarchy. I spoke a local dialect when I was young, but I learned to speak Mandarin after I went to school. There were not enough teachers qualified and willing to teach English during my schooling, so I fell far behind in my English training. Instead of playing with my smart phone and video games, I prefer stick to reading professional literature in my leisure time. I am not interested in much social interaction, but sometimes I would like to get together with friends and neighbors. I am really concerned about medical-related policies, because they directly affect my work. In my opinion, investments are important for familial wealth accumulation, and I invest some of my disposal income in stocks. With regard to my pay grade, I expect to get a pay raise so I can buy a new SUV, but I am relatively satisfied with my current economic condition. It is well known that medical staff in China are under a great deal of pressure, but my parents and neighbors believe that being salaried by the state is something to be pound of. In fact, I am expecting policy reforms in the medical industry: I think the government should invest more in medical innovations and treatments. At the same time, I am concerned about the growing doctor-patient

disputes in China."

Interviewee IV is a peasant holding agricultural *hukou* status. As an indigenous villager in the Ruanwan village of the Hubei province, she has been engaged in agricultural work all her life. This interview was completed in front of her dilapidated house. She was dressed in plain clothes. The annual income of her family was less then 10,000 yuan (equal to 1300 Euro), putting her in the peasant class. She was talkative and held an optimistic outlook, especially when we talked about the pension system in rural areas. This was likely in part due to the fact her family was in debt. She told me that:

> *"My parents were both involved in agricultural work. My brother was disabled in the army and I had to quit high school to take care of him. I have been in agricultural work all my life, and I have never worked in the city. I used to only speak my local dialect, but I started to learn Mandarin in my dance classes. I am not interested in the news and I am not all that concerned about what is happening in the world. I like to play on my smart phone and to dance with friends in my leisure time. I usually get my information from WeChat*[34]*. I don't have any financial investments, but my husband and I have commercial insurance paid by our daughter-in-law. Currently I feel confident about my future, because pension policies are biased to rural areas."*

Interviewee V is a disabled veteran living in Ruanwan village. He was a solider in the Sino-Vietnamese War. As an agricultural *hukou* holder, he had to move back to the village where he was born after getting injured in the war. Currently, he is left jobless and being taken care of by his wife. As an injured veteran, for the moment, he recieves 4,000 yuan per year through his pension. He couldn't speak Mandarin well, looked tired, and not willing to talk much. He told me:

[34]WeChat is China's largest messaging, social media, and mobile payment app developed by Tencent Holdings Limited.

"I went to middle school, but I have a low education level. I don't use a smart phone or a computer, and I think they are too difficult for me to handle. Watching TV and reading newspapers take up my leisure time. I don't have any investment experience or plans, but I am satisfied with my life for the moment. It is good to hear that the Xi administration is making an effort to improve the rural pension system, and I am looking forward to it."

Interviewee VI runs a restaurant in the Ye village, adjacent to Jinhua City in east China. He was born in this village in 1969 and held an agricultural *hukou*. He told me that just a few months ago, his agricultural *hukou* was required to changed to uniform local *hukou* by local policies. He stated that he was not interested in village elections or other political affairs, even though his father was a party secretary for the village committee. He has been working in the non-agricultural business sector for over 20 years. Although he doesn't have a high education level, he spoke clearly about his life and business, and expresses himself quite logically:

I don't like go to school, so I only obtained a primary level of education. Initially, I was an individual laborer in building materials transportation Afterwards, my wife and I started to run this restaurant and to extend our business to raw food materials. I speak a local dialect in my daily life, but I also speak Mandarin well, because Mandarin is more widely used in business and interaction and I therefore think I had to learn it. I am more interested in international than domestic news. Compared to computers, I am more familiar with my smart phone. In the earlier years of our business, my wife and I felt a lot of pressure and were forced to work from 6 am to 10 pm. It is getting better now and I have leisure time to play bridge cards with my friends. I have invested in stocks and I own a property in the city. In addition to this, I have invested over 150,000 yuan (nearly 20,000 Euro) in commercial insurance for the whole family. My wife and I are quite respected in this village. I believe that one's social network is quite significant so I definitely attempt to remain on good terms with powerful people. I

don't want any political titles, and I believe it is a "money talks" world. Besides, in rural society, clan councils have always overriden party branches in making decisions about village affairs. Sometimes, villages cadres don't necessarily signify access to power and resources. As for my outlook, I think I am optimistic about the future, because our business is running well. Our only concern is our son. He is serving in the army now. My wife made him join the army five years ago, so that he would learn self-discipline. We will provide him with financial support as long as he needs."

The stories of the six interviewees above suggest the major changes that have taken place in rural Chinese social stratification. The interviewee I, II, and III are of the advantaged group of rural society. On the contrary, interviewees IV and V are among the marginalized. Basically the structural relations between these two clusters denote the maintenance of the socialist inequality system in rural China. Interviewee VI however reflects the emerging middle class in rural society, a conclusion derived from his general wealth and his robust social network. Changes in social fabric also signify that the contemporary socialist milieus have absorbed some characteristics of capitalist socioculture, which largely demonstrates my working hypothesis regarding China's socioculture under reform. That is to say, in addition to ideological beliefs about the redistribution system, one may be motivated to make decisions reliant on the market force.

Two steps are necessary for constructing habitus types for China's rural society. The first step is to differentiate actions yielded by communicative knowledge from habitus generated by conjunctive experience based on what interviewees have literally said. Second, habitus traits that are most relevant for the construction of each type are elaborated upon. Although it is associated with some rural-to-urban *hukou* holders (e.g., interviewee II), renting out a self-build house is ruled out from the investment habitus generated by symbolic capital, as this action results from knowledge about the rise in value after land requisition and the conversion of *hukou* status, rather than from everyday practice. By reconstructing the topical structure of the text, relevant habitus traits are found and shown in Table 8.

Typology is developed as a methodological strategy with the aim of developing a

Table 8: List of relevant habitus traits in rural society

Cognitive Ability	Speaking either dialect or Mandarin; Only speaking dialect; --- Information learning; No interest on information learning.
Social Interaction	No intention; Relaxation-oriented social interaction; Motivational social interaction.
Self-Discipline	Killing time by entertainment; Busy in work and no leisure time; Learning professional knowledge.
Adaptation to Market System	Investing money; No idea about investment.
Attitude toward the Future	Self-confidence; Industry expectation; Social security dependence.

descriptive framework and orientation that is useful in constructing habitus types. The typology of everyday practices is constructed through analysis of extensive observations of interviewees' habitus traits within a transforming context. The application of typology in this interpretation needs to retain the configurational characters of habitus types. Following steps for this are proposed: (1) type construction, (2) substruction, (3) type identification by the reduction of the property-space the comparison.

Firstly, type construction develops a "scientific perception" of the regularities and relationships that "ought" to be obtained in terms of the theoretical foundation and prior research results (McKinney, 1969). In a market-oriented society, a human practice tendency "ought" to be shaped by one's positions in a antagonistic class relationship. With regard to competitiveness assessments, there is a dividing line between strong and weak levels in social stratification. Extracted from the elaborated upon qualitative interviews, the practice tendency of strong competitiveness in rural society mainly concerns goal-orientation. Weak competitiveness however is characterized by lacking goal-orientation.

Secondly, property-space could be seen as a swarm of empirically definable measures that are developed for typological construction (McKinney, 1969). This step reveals the operational definitions of competitiveness indexes. Goal-orientation, theoretically, depicts humans' motivational disposition of developing and validating abilities in achievement settings, and explains why some individuals adapt to changes better (VandeWalle, 1997; DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Such a disposition, therefore, has particular relevance to specific habitus traits, including: use of Mandarin, information learning, developing professional skills, being busy with work, motivation toward social interaction, investing money, self-confidence and industry expectation. Heterogeneously, individuals who lack this disposition tend to not speak Mandarin, not to seek out information, spend more time involved in leisure activities, not be motivated by social interaction, not invest money in financial products, and be more dependent on the social security system in rural China.

Next, the underlying continuum of the elaborated upon traits of goal-orientation and lack of goal-orientation need to be further specified. In brief, some habitus traits can be reduced to one habitus type. Goal orientation concerns two specific disposition

types: learning orientation, which describes human traits related to approaching situations by mastering the acquisition of new knowledge and by pursuing an adaptive response pattern, and performance orientation that is associated with maladaptive response patterns that results from dispositional trait of seeking validation of competence in order to receive favorable judgments (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002; DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Since motivation that distinguishes habitus traits of goal-orientation between learning orientation and performance orientation, habitus traits can be reduced to one habitus type based on motivational homogeneity.

Finally, four habitus types emerge from the combination of dispositional types (see Table 9). The first is called *determined habitus* and it is comprised of positive learning motivation and positive performance motivation. The second habitus type which I call the *pragmatic habitus*, is composed of negative performance motivation and positive learning motivation. The third, the *performative habitus*, consists of negative learning motivation and positive performance motivation. The fourth, *depressed habitus type*, is characterized by negative learning motivation and negative performative motivation.

Table 9: Habitus types in rural society

Habitus Types	**Dispositional Attributes**
Determined	Positive learning motivation, positive performance motivation.
Pragmatic	Positive learning motivation, negative performance motivation.
Performative	Negative learning motivation, positive performance motivation.
Depressed	Negative learning motivation, negative performance motivation.

As I have interpreted from my interview data, the performative habitus type is a part of socialist socioculture that has been integrated into cadre and Communist Party membership, and is valued in rural China. The pragmatic habitus type can be seen as a capitalist socioculture, as it is largely relevant to the rise in rural emerging class. The determined habitus type signifies the hybrid of performative and pragmatic traits. The

depressed habitus type is characterized by holding a fatalistic view of being incapable to do anything. Under economic reform, these four habitus types are fused together to constitute a sociocultural system in rural society.

6.3.2 Habitus Types in Urban China

For constructing habitus types in urban China, interviewee profiles and the literal text of their interviews have been summarized below:

Interviewee VII was born in 1985 in a village in the Hebei province in northern China. He currently runs a small grocery in capital city, Beijing. An agricultural *hukou* holder with a three-year specified collage degree, he is now married, but doesn't live with his wife and two children. He was talkative, logical, and revealed some insight into himself and public policies. I was told that he would leave Beijing in two years, because Beijing was getting increasing xenophobic:

> *"I have been getting used to speaking Mandarin since childhood, but my English is not good. After college, I worked in a company located in Guangzhou (south China) for four years. Afterwards, I came to Beijing, because it is a short distance from my hometown to here. I regularly read Chinese newspaper and watch news released by Phoenix Television. I am very interested in international news. Currently I am busy with work, usually between 7 am and 12 pm. I have a part-time logistics job, so there is no leisure time for me. I believe social capital is significant for one's career but, unfortunately, I lack this capital. I invest in stocks and gold, and own a property in another small city adjacent to my hometown. China's consumer inflation is rising, so I never save money in banks. The marketing environment has been good in Beijing in these past few years, and I did make money in my business. But now, the situation is getting worse. To be honest, I am confused about my future. I was going to own a fruit orchards in my hometown and I am good at that, but now it is not allowed due to environmental protection policies. People at my age are under pressure: I have parents to support. My children will go to school soon, and I want to send them to good schools.*

After all, going to school is the only way for ordinary people to move up.

Interviewee VIII is an express delivery man in Beijing. He was born in a village in the Shandong province of northern China in 1985. The interviewee is an agricultural *hukou* holders with a high school education. This interviewee wore very ordinary dress and looked tired. Due to his intensive work load, he was reluctant to talk to me, but provided some information about his life and practice.

> *"I grew up in a poor village. I came to Beijing to make money, and I have been here for seven years. I speak Mandarin now, only speaking my local dialect when in my hometown. I am not interested in the news. I usually use WeChat and QQ to contact people. I work 11-12 hours everyday, and I don't have leisure time. I don't have the savings to make investments. I am very depressed about the future. I am not well paid and the cost of living is getting higher in Beijing. Beijing is currently forcing migrant workers to leave, and so I may leave Beijing and go back to my hometown soon! I don't have any plans for the future, and just take each day as it comes!"*

Interviewee IX is a technician working for a biotechnology company in Beijing. She was born in 1990 in a village in the Gansu province of northwestern China. She is an agricultural *hukou* holder with a bachelor's degree in life science. She told me that her father died when she was a kid, and so her mother had to raise four children on her own. Before joining this company, she was a state-salaried employee working in a public hospital in Tianjin. Since her mother was troubled with a disease, she had to quit to take care of her mother for a whole year. The interviewee came across to me as well-mannered and talkative. During the interview, she was quite willing to share her experience and outlook:

> *"I started to learn Mandarin while in university. Compared to my peers, my English is not good. There were not enough teachers qualified to teach us English in my hometown. I usually work from 9am to 5pm, but once*

in a while I have to work overtime. However, I don't have leisure time because my long commute drains my energy every day. I am not interested in the news, and I use WeChat, QQ, and Weibo for social networking. I don't invest in the financial sectors. Beijing is not a good choice for me in the long term: it is highly competitive and the property values here are too high for me to afford. I plan on improving my professional skills in Beijing, and then moving on to another city that fits my needs to settle down. My boss expects to launch a business in Fujian (southeast China) and, if everything goes well, it's possible I could get transferred there. I think Southeast China is better developed and has better air quality. I am confident in my professional abilities, and now I am making an effort to build wealth through my professional skills."

Interviewee X is a full professor at a prestigious public university in Beijing. The interview was rescheduled several times, due to the interviewee's schedule conflicts. He was born in late 1970s in the Heilongjiang province of northeastern China with non agricultural *hukou* status. He is a Communist Party member and holds a Ph.D. in political science. We had a conversation in a cafe, and he answered my questions seriously, even expressing his support for junior researchers.

"I grew up in an intellectual family and my parents are both college teachers. I speak Mandarin all my life and I am fluent in English. Like most Chinese people, I use WeChat to contact people. Of course I need to obtain various kinds of information from different news media outlets, including CNN and the BBC. Having several part-time jobs at government agencies and with the media, I am occupied with work all day, so I don't have time for leisure. Sometimes I have social interactions concerning professional work. In consideration of the inflation in China, my wife and I usually invest 70%-80% of our assets in properties, stocks, and bonds. With the real estate market slowing down, I am looking for other options for monetary investment. I look for low risk investments, because my wife and I have two kids, and their education is my first concern. I am optimistic about the

future. My wife and I are not indigenous to Beijing, but we are in a good socioeconomic state due to relying on our own efforts. I am confident in myself."

Interviewee XI is a worker who was laid off from a state-owned enterprise in Jinhua City of the Zhejiang province. In the 1990s, due to the reform of state enterprises launched by the Chinese government, tens of millions of people were put out of work and marginalized in urban society. This interviewee is one of them. Born in 1970, she is a rural-to-urban *hukou* holder with a middle school educational level. On the day of the interview, she arrived in ordinary dress, and appeared to me to be warm-hearted. I was told that she had to do some part-time work to support her daughter studying in university.

"I grew up in the Hunan province, I came here to take over my father's job in a state-owned enterprise, which was allowed by policy at that time. I used to speak a local dialect in my hometown, and started to use Mandarin after I joined the enterprise. I have part-time work and usually work 8 hours per day. I am only interested in the news concerning bread-and-butter issues. I usually do some housework, watch TV and chat with neighbors in my leisure. I only use WeChat to contact people, and don't have experience in other forms of social media. With less schooling, I don't think it is possible for me to improve my professional skills or start up a business. I know nothing about investments. As for the further, I hope everything goes well for my daughter. She will graduate from a university soon and I am really hoping she can find a job salaried by the state system. I am not a goal-oriented person. What will be, will be."

Interviewee XII is a civil servant in the Publicity Office of Jinhua Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. He was born in 1958 and served in the army after the Cultural Revolution. He joined the Communist Party during his term of military service. He has a three-year specialized college degree (part-time). He told me that it was the college degree that allowed him to get into the party and administrative system after leaving the military, and his *hukou* status was transferred from rural

residency to urban residency after being a state-salaried civil servant. I found him to be well-mannered and quite talkative with regard to his experience and opinions.

> *"My parents were state cadres, but both of them were sent back to the countryside during the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution. So I grew up in countryside. I spoke both the local dialect and Mandarin during my childhood. After serving in the army, I finally started to get used to speaking Mandarin. I can speak simple English, but I am not good at it. I tend to get my information from newspapers and broadcastings. I am interested in the news related to important social concerns. Social justice issues are my primary concern, and I am planning to write a book on China's preschool eduction system after I retire. I am very busy with my work, and I usually work over ten hours everyday. At the same time, I have to deal with a number of social interactions while on business. Besides QQ and WeChat, I also use Email to exchange messages with my colleges at work. I don't invest my finances. I am not good at that kind of thing. But, basically, I am satisfied with my economic condition. With regard to the future, I am expecting reform of the political system. If the political mistakes cannot be corrected, history might repeat itself."*

Interviewee XIII is a rural-to-urban construction worker in Jinhua City of the Zhejiang province. He originally came from southwest Guizhou, one of the poorest areas in China. He is 55 years old, married, and he dropped out in primary school. I was told that his wife came with him to the coastal city in 2010 to make money. They had three children, one daughter and two sons. However, one of their boys died in an accident and the other of disease. The interview was carried out in the interviewee's simple home. I was asked by the interviewee that if he could get paid for the interview.

> *"I am almost illiterate, and without any professional skills. The transportation network in my rural hometown is very bad, and he people are very poor. Most of my neighbors stay there for the agricultural work. I have come to*

this city because my niece has been here for several years, and she offers her help to my wife and I. I only speak the dialect of my hometown. I don't know anything about Mandarin, but I have to try to speak Mandarin at construction sites. I watch Xinwen Lianbo[35] *everyday. It says pension policies are made biased toward people like me, which anchors me. In my hometown, I don't have farmland, I had to live on my own, so I left at my age of 48. I will eventually go back to my hometown. I have two grandsons. I hope they can go to college."*

Interviewee XIV is a worker in a state-holding company in the city of Tianjin in northern China. Born in Tianjin in 1958, he is a non-agricultural *hukou* holder with a middle school education. He is going to officially retire this year. I was told that due to the Cultural Revolution, he had to become a factory worker after middle school. This interviewee seemed to struggle to express his ideas, but was very easy-going.

"I usually speak my local dialect in my daily life, but I did learn Mandarin in school. I can only speak a very small amount of English, for example, 'Long live chairman Mao!'(laughs). People of my generation were largely influenced by the Cultural Revolution. I became a factory worker when I was 16. I worked hard. I am not good at studying, so I didn't go to college or develop professional skills, but rather continued to work in a factory within the state system after the reform and opening up. I am not very sociable, but I pet goldfish in my leisure time. I am interested in local news of Tianjin, so I watch local programming everyday. I don't invest my money, but my wife invests in stocks and funds. Regarding the future, we are supposed to be optimistic, because of the 'Two Contrary Goals' proposed in the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of China. To be honest, however, I think China is faced with lots of problems: we fall short of health care resources, and have problems with inflation and high housing prices, etc."

Interviewee XV is a communications engineer working for Huawei, a leading global

[35]A daily news program produced by China Central Television.

private provider of information and communications technology infrastructure and smart devices. He lives in the city of Hangzhou in eastern China with his newly-wed wife. Born in Hangzhou in 1988, he is a non-agricultural *hukou* holder with a Ph.D. in engineering. He joined in Chinese Communist Party while going to university in 2009. During the interview, the interviewee came across as logically-organized and appeared to be excited when we talked about technology development.

> *I grew up in an easygoing family. I am an only child of my parents. I have been speaking Mandarin since childhood. My English is good, at least in terms of fluency in reading and listening. I work over 12 hours everyday and almost have no leisure time. I use WeChat to contact with family and friends. Email and telephone are my most frequently used forms of communication at work. I prefer to use the Internet rather than legacy media*[36] *to obtain information. I am most interested in news that pertains to technology. I go to parties with friends for public holidays, but not frequently. I have purchased some wealth investment products, and I expect yield stability on them. In consideration of the development of the IT industry, I am optimistic about the future. China is in a leading position in the field of artificial intelligence, which provides us lots of opportunities to develop and apply professional skills. I think people at my age are expected to have about one million yuan (120,000 Euro) in liquid savings, so I should definitely keep on working hard. Professional networking is important for career development in the technology industry, in fact, I have been noticed by some head hunters (laugh). My job is well paid but under pressure. It is impossible for me to make a great fortune overnight, and I don't expect that."*

Interviewee XVI is a well-known private entrepreneur in the Hubei province. He was born in a village in the Zhejiang province in 1963. He earned his bachelor's degree in management science from a very prestigious university in China. It was his university

[36]Legacy media refers to traditional media, such as radio, television, and newspaper.

degree that allowed him to transfer his original agricultural *hukou* to a non-agricultural *hukou* in the 1980s. He is a Communist Party member, and was going to make a career in politics. He served in government agencies for several years, but he missed a chance at promotion in the 1990s due to a serious illness. After this period, he had to turn to running his own business to make his gains.

> *I spoke a local dialect when I was a child, and learned Mandarin in school. After leaving my hometown, it became a necessity to speak Mandarin in order to communicate with people. I speak very little English. Of course I read news everyday. In China, it is very important to interpret news discourse, because policy signals are always released through this discourse. I don't have time for leisure, because I am very busy coordinating complex projects everyday. I have to deal with social interactions on business. As you know, it is important for one's career development to develop good connections with professional and powerful people. I definitely invest money, and I also encourage my relatives and friends to invest money in properties, because inflation is inevitable in China and it is possible to use financial leverage for property investments. With regard to the future, China is not a completely market-oriented country, and its development relies highly on policies and regulations, so let's just see how it goes. But I am nevertheless still confident on my self."*

The ten interviewees above were selected based upon the statistical relationship between symbolic capital and socioeconomic characteristics that is revealed in chapter 5. Reflected by the interview texts, the action traits appear to be complicated in urban society, signifying the complexity of social structure in urban China. The actions emphasized by the narration of interviewees and the descriptions I developed constitute two layers of knowledge: the communicative knowledge corresponding to the level of knowledge and the conjunctive knowledge generated within human everyday practice. It is reflected in interview texts that the use of English, which has relevance to cognitive ability, doesn't serve as an orientation for practical action but, rather, directly results from a shortage of English teachers in specific historical contexts. The habitual use of

English, thus, is ruled out of determining habitus traits.

Table 10: List of relevant habitus traits in urban society

Cognitive Ability	Speaking either dialect or Mandarin; Only speaking Mandarin; Only speaking dialect; --- Information learning via traditional media; Information learning via social media; No interest on information learning; --- Attention to news relevant to particular issues; Attention to general news; No attention to news.
Social Interaction	No intention; Relaxation-oriented social interaction; Business-oriented social interaction.
Self-Discipline	Killing time at leisure; Busy in work and no leisure time; Learning professional knowledge regularly.
Adaptation to Market System	Investing money with systematic judgment; Investing money with heuristic judgment; No idea about investment.
Attitude toward the Future	Self-confidence; Concerning industry prospects; Expecting government regulation; No idea.

As shown in Table 10, the relevant habitus traits are listed through a reconstructed topical structure of the literal text. These habitus traits will be classified within a framework of socialist-capitalist divided socioculture, which is in accordance with our hypothetical sociocultural system. Likewise, typology is applied as a methodological strategy in this section to develop a descriptive framework of orientation for constructing habitus types in urban society. The application of typology in habitus types con-

struction is based upon the analysis of extensive observations of interviewees' habitus traits within a reforming context. The four steps mentioned in last section are employed to reduce the habitus traits to general categories.

Firstly, type construction is used to develop a "scientific perception" of how human tendencies "ought" to be categorized. As revealed by multiple correspondence analysis of social classes in chapter 5, more social strata exist in urban society, which suggests greater antagonistic class relationships. The characteristic of goal-orientation can be interpreted as the main distinction among class groups, as it is associated with capabilities of accessing either redistributive power or market value. From the qualitative interviews, interviewees can be found to be engaged in one of two levels of this characteristic: Strong goal-orientation or lacking a well-defined goal (weak goal-orientation).

The second step reveals the operational definitions of goal-orientation indexes that serve as measures of human capabilities for accessing capital. This step is implemented by observing property-space among habitus traits. Seen as a dispositional trait that is used to predict why some individuals adapt to changes better, (strong) goal-orientation has significant relevance for the following habitus traits: attention to news relevant to particular issues, business-oriented social interactions, busy work with no leisure time, learning professional knowledge regularly, investing money with systematic judgment, high self-confidence, and concern over industry prospects. Heterogeneously, people who lack goal-orientation are characterized by little to no interest for information learning and news, killing significant amount of time for leisure, little to no idea about investment, and few thoughts or concerns about the future. Aside from this, some habitus traits, for example, attention to general news, investing money with heuristic judgment, and expecting government regulation can be viewed as characteristics of lacking a well-defined goal.

Next, I reduce habitus traits to general categories based upon motivational homogeneity under market forces. Conceptualized as a disposition or as a state that predicts achievements in different settings, goal-orientation has its relevance in two kinds of motivations: one that is aimed at the more positive goals of attaining success, and the other is aimed at avoiding failure (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). In place of the learning-performance orientation dichotomy, the approach-avoidance distinction is

employed in this section to appropriately depict achievement goals in urban society. In particular, approach orientation is characterized by a preference for challenging tasks, a positive attitude towards learning, and persistence in the face of difficulties, which is referred to as mastery motivation. On the contrary, avoidance orientation is evoked by the self-protection motivational tendency, aimed at avoiding potential negative outcomes. Approach and avoidance goals are viewed as "exerting their differential effects on achievement behavior by activating divergent sets of motivational processes" (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996, p. 462).

The last step consists of constructing five habitus types based upon the combination of dispositional attributes (see: Table 11). The first is defined as *ambitious habitus type*, which is characterized by positive mastery motivation and positive self-protection motivation. The second is called *professional habitus type*, which is comprised of positive mastery motivation and moderate self-protection motivation. The third type is *flexible habitus type*, which describes people with moderate mastery motivation and moderate self-protection motivation. Negative mastery motivation and moderate self-protection motivation constitute the fourth type called *passive habitus type*. The fifth is *deprived habitus type*, characterized by negative mastery motivation and negative protection motivation.

Table 11: Habitus types in urban society

Habitus Types	**Dispositional Attributes**
Ambitious	Positive mastery motivation, positive self-protection motivation.
Professional	Positive mastery motivation, moderate self-protection motivation.
Flexible	Moderate mastery motivation, moderate self-protection motivation.
Passive	Negative mastery motivation, moderate self-protection motivation.
Deprived	Negative mastery motivation, negative self-protection motivation.

The motivational heterogeneity in mastery and self-protection denotes human awareness of the transforming society. Mastery motivation reveals how an individual deals with potential opportunity, while self-protection motivation signifies how an individual avoids potential risks. Seen from the perspective of interviewee actions and utterances, market force facilitates socialist milieus to absorb some characteristics of capitalist socioculture. In particular, the ambitious and professional habitus types in urban China are neither typical socialist socioculture nor capitalist socioculture. The qualitative interviews revealed by different means that these two habitus groups absorb valued traits from both sociocultural systems to keep themselves competitive in this transforming society. Individuals that constitutes a flexible habitus type are defined by their initiative displayed within the market economy, typical of capitalist socioculture in urban society. However, this habitus type is usually short of the symbolic capital under a socialist political system. The passive habitus type can be viewed as the vestige of the socioculture of the socialist worker, as its everyday practice was very affected by the planned economy in cities before the socioeconomic transformation. As a matter of fact, this dispositional tendency won't fit within an environment defined by market competition anymore. The deprived habitus type is characterized by a lack of traits that are valued in society.

6.4 Qualitative Data Analysis: Habitus and Its Contribution to Inequality

6.4.1 Symbolic Capital, Habitus, and Class in Rural Society

The quantitative results found in chapter 5 demonstrate that the configuration of social classes in rural China is to some extent informed by the earlier state-socialist inequality system. The following groups are statistically categorized into privilege classes: village cadres, the Communist Party members, non-agricultural *hukou* holders, and employees inside the state system. This is to say that the hierarchical system within the socialist socioculture nearly has not been destroyed by the socioeconomic transformation in rural society. Meanwhile, an evident dividing line is found between privileged classes and an emerging affluent class. Commercial villagers appear in the capitalist socioculture

and live under much better economic conditions, especially in rural areas of coastal regions. Peasants who have never engaged in non-agricultural work are becoming even more marginalized.

Through these in-depth interviews, it was found that village cadres and Communist Party members are best categorized as maintaining a positive performance motivation. During the interviews, two interviewees repeatedly emphasized the importance of the judgments of villagers with regard to their work. These utterances denote that, for people who are conferred a title of village cadre or Communist Party member in rural society, performance orientation has been internalized as a disposition. Determined habitus type and performative habitus type are most relevant to the privileged class. However, determined habitus type is more likely to be identified among village cadres in regions of developed market. I was told by interviewee II and interviewee VI that since the 1990s, villagers who are successful in commercial business have been warmly welcomed to apply for Communist Party membership and to run in village-level elections, particularly in rural areas of coastal regions. With experience of commercial business, these candidates tend to pursue adaptive and effective response patterns in rural governance and personal self development. In order to test this, I interviewed a village cadre in the Zhejiang province who had a family-owned business before becoming a Communist Party member and a village cadre:

> *"I grew up in this village and was invited by fellow villagers to come back to run in an election. Before that, I ran a private company and did it well. I was welcomed because villagers wanted a cadre that excelled in economic development. In recent years, my main job has been to develop the collective economy, to settle ownership disputes, and to encourage private sector investment. I also made a decision to use the collective economy to help provide other public services to villagers."*

In contrast, as a village cadre from a less developed region, interviewee I didn't seem to concern himself with market-adaptive governance, but rather to relied on traditional thought rooted in the planned economy system. Performative habitus type, therefore, is more likely to be shared by village cadres in rural areas of inland regions.

It is the performance orientation practice that to some extent grants village cadres the trust to carry out their authority, to settle domestic disputes, and to allocate socioeconomic resources. In this sense, village cadres usually have evident advantages in social status and power. It was also acknowledged by interviewee I that even though village cadres are located in agricultural-based regions, their annual pay, provided by the local government finance bureaus, is almost twice that of an on-farm peasant.

MCA results also show that people employed or even salaried by the state system in cities that are still living in rural areas are spatially clustered around privileged classes. As revealed in the interview discourses, individuals of this group tend to develop capitalist/socialist hybrid orientations. Seeing as how they are in a relatively higher educational bracket, developing professional skills for their careers has become a part of everyday practice for these people. In this sense, even in rural society, education plays a significant role in facilitating people's learning orientation and class situation.

A emerging affluent class is developing out of the capitalist socioculture. This class group tends to embody the pragmatic habitus type, focusing on how to be advantageous in market competition. Found from both statistical results and qualitative interviews, it is the pragmatic habitus type that orients people in rural society to respond to market transformation in an adaptive way. As a result, individuals characterized by this pragmatic orientation are in a much better economic situation and tend to be concentrated in rural areas of coastal regions. During the interview, I was informed by interviewee VI that with the support of clans, some wealthy villagers might be willing to run in elections.

As two forms of symbolic capital in rural China, the Communist Party membership and village cadre significantly differentiate determined and performative habitus from pragmatic habitus in seeking political influences and favorable judgments. In this sense, the economic advantages of affluent class and the power advantages of privileged class revealed by quantitative research have been justified by the unequal access to symbolic capital as well as habitus traits.

On-farm peasants have remained distant from redistributive power and from the market transformation, and therefore have become further marginalized in rural society. The depressed habitus type is found among the population that lacks goal-orientation.

People with the depressed orientation hold a fatalistic view that they are incapable to do anything other than what they actually do. Representatives of this habitus don't jump at the chances to improve their economic situation, but rather remain unchanged. In particular, people with the depressed orientation deliver heavy dependence on the newly-established rural pension system. Moreover, as quantitatively revealed in chapter 5, marginalized groups are more likely to be lacking off-farm work experience, which makes it hard for them to realize what characteristics are valued after the shift towards economic liberalism. Interviewee IV and Interviewee V are the representatives of this marginalized group with depressed orientation. For differing reasons, they didn't migrate to urban areas for jobs and better earnings, or initiate individual business in their village. Consequently, their attitudes towards the future were found to be highly dependent on how the rural social security system would go. As seen from both quantitative and qualitative results, the depressed orientation appears to comprise the majority of the population in rural society, particularly in rural inland China.

6.4.2 Symbolic Capital, Habitus, and Class in Urban Society

As demonstrated by the results of the MCA in chapter 5, the social structure of urban China is changing rapidly, but the state-socialist class system persists and to some extent informs the structures and habitus. Firstly, as elite groups that benefited from the Party's monopolization of all decision-making processes before the reform and opening up, civil servants employed by party-state system and the Communist Party members transformed into the urban middle class and above within the reforming context. Cadres serving in party and government agencies thus tend to hold higher social status and power. This was further confirmed by interviewee XII who is a cadre in a Communist Party agency. He explicitly acknowledged that state cadres employed by party-state system have closer social connections with upper class people and therefore the ability to influence certain decision-making processes. Due to the proximity to redistributive power and the consolidation of privileged status under reform, I call these cadres serving in party and government agencies *middle (and upper middle) class of socialist elite*. In addition, another middle and upper middle class bracket grew out of economic liberalism, and has became associated with higher education and

income. I use the term proposed by Goodman (2014) to call this group the *aspirational middle (and upper middle) class*. Aside from the expansion of market institutions, the re-initiation of college entrance examinations also provides a crucial opportunity for people, especially for those originally holding agricultural *hukou*, to move up in urban society. Entrepreneurs and professional and technical talents are the representatives of this emerging class. Even though some of these people are employed inside the state system, they don't necessarily rely on the redistributive institutions, but rather on professional skills to access socioeconomic resources.

Ambitious and professional habitus types are strongly linked to the urban middle class and above. This is to say that middle and upper middle class people tend to be motivated by persistence in goal directed activities. This trait was reflected in the utterances of interviewees X, XII, XV, and XVI, representing this urban advantaged class in my research. In terms of practice, there is a difference in how different individuals strive to achieve these goals among these people. Both interviewee XII and XVI emphasized the importance of establishing good connections with government officials for achieving goals. In contrast, as professional and technical talents, interviewee X and XV tended to use professional networking to seek opportunities. It is found that, individuals with work experience in party and government agencies were more willing to acknowledge the role of state power in capitalist activities. Compared to interviewees X, XII, and XVI, interviewee XV tended to avoid potential negative outcomes by assessing heuristic rather than systematic information. One speculation I have is that, due to the lack of experience in judgment, young middle class people are more likely to be oriented by moderate self-protection. In addition, through the experience of interviewee XV, who is a Communist Party member working for a leading private information communication technology manufacturer, it was further verified that unless inside the state system, the Communist Party membership doesn't reveal privileges with respect to career promotion or economic returns. It is hard to tell if these two habitus types explain how Communist Party members perceive the world around them and react to it, because since the post-Mao era, the Chinese Communist Party has shifted from loyalty recruitment to politically screened elite recruitment[37].

[37]For the Chinese Communist Party, there is a dynamic model of political screening. After the initiation of the reform and opening up in the late 1970s, the Party explicitly deemphasized family

Secondly, the worker group within the cadre-worker dichotomy has transformed into the urban working class under market forces. Statistical results from chapter 5 show that individuals from this class are more likely to be employed by the state-owned enterprises, state-holding enterprises, and some pubic organizations, and are often non-agricultural *hukou* holders with little accumulated economic capital, for example having full ownership of only one property, in cities. Practically, Compared to the marginalized working class, individuals of this class still benefit from a series of urban-biased policies. Therefore, I call this class *urban working class*. Furthermore, the results of MCA demonstrate that, this class constitutes the majority of the urban population.

Passive habitus type marks this urban working class. More specifically, this habitus type denotes a reluctance to reorient toward the market economy. As mentioned in chapter 5, the state-socialist occupational hierarchy is determined by political loyalty, at its height in China during the Cultural Revolution between 1966-1976. Before the initiation of the reform of state-owned enterprises, workers employed by state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were identified as the ideologically correct occupational group and were guaranteed lifelong job security (Walder, 1986; Bian, 1996). During the period of planned economy, workers employed by SOEs were in a relatively advantaged position in urban society. Interviewee XIV, a representative of this working class, stated that due to the previously promised *iron rice bowl*, he was not able to develop professional skills that might be useful in market competition:

> *"I don't have a university degree or professional skills. Previously, we were encouraged to donate ourselves to socialist industrialization, rather than to develop professional skills. I think it is lucky that I kept myself from being laid off during the SOE reform, because I wouldn't be qualified in the labour market. At least, the social security system in Tianjin is fair to people like me."*

Seen from the results of MCA, individuals like XIV constitute the majority of the

class origin as an important indicator of political loyalty, but rather screened people by the extent to which they accepted and were able to make a contribution to the current political system through their educational credentials (see: Bian et al., 2001).

population in urban China. Within a state-socialist sociocultural paradigm, although people of this group were in a relatively disadvantaged position in the worker-cadre dichotomy, they were still guaranteed a steady income and social benefits that could not be obtained by most Chinese citizens. At the same time, most of them didn't possess cultural or administrative capital that can now be used to exchange favors in the market environment. The reliance on the "iron rice bowl" system culturally led people to fail to gain the adaptive edge that would benefit them during the transition to the efficiency-oriented system. Consequently, there has been a decline in socioeconomic strata of the class dominated by workers employed inside state-owned or state-holding enterprises under economic reform.

Under China's economic reform, ambitious, professional, and passive habitus types are found to be anchored in symbolic domination of employment structure. Specifically, this symbolic construction establishes class status by reinforcing human habitus differences in dealing with market competition. Seen from quantitative results, this mechanism has justified the symbolic configurations of both urban middle class and urban working class.

Next, a working class with capitalist characteristic develops out of economic liberalism in urban China. Statistical results from chapter 5 demonstrate that there is a cloud of individuals who are characterized as agricultural *hukou* holders that own small individual businesses. These characteristics mainly describe the discriminated against group of rural-to-urban migrants who move from rural to urban areas for jobs and better lives without obtaining permanent urban residency. Practically, besides self-employed individuals, some white collars workers migrating from rural areas have also been categorized into this class. The emergence of such class is a result of China's liberal economic reform and rapid socioeconomic growth that in turn has created millions of job vacancies and expanded market demand (Kuang & Li, 2012). I call this social class *marginalized working class* within China's reforming context: On the one hand, due to the possession of little economic and/or social capital, this group cannot be described as proletariat or of the lower class; On the other hand, seen as an urban caste system, the *hukou* system has resulted in discriminatory policies against migrants and "intensified the tension between urbanites and migrants" (Tang & Yang, 2008, p. 768).

Interviewee VII and IX are the representatives of this marginalized working class.

It has been found that flexible habitus type is the maker of the marginalized working class. Moving to cities for better earnings and better lives reflects an adaptive attitude towards poverty in a relatively liberal economic context, although the *hukou* system still doesn't necessarily grant the migrants permanent urban residency rights. Particularly compared to ambitious and professional habitus types, the flexible type reflects a conservative orientation toward goal achievement. It might be ascribed to discriminatory residency policies and/or an ordinary educational background. For instance, I was told by interviewee VII:

> *"I was going to start a new grocery nearby, however, it is not allowed under the policies of old city reconstruction. China won't relax restrictions on settling in megacities like Beijing, but it has rather relaxed its control of migrants settling in small and medium cities. I may start my business in a small city adjacent to my hometown to make sure my children are well educated."*

For some people of this class, it is very possible to gain upward mobility through the accumulation of capital or through market opportunities. Interviewee IX expressed her own expectations in this regard during her interview:

> *"It's a good opportunity to be transferred to the branch office in Fujian. It is known that Beijing is a highly competitive city filled with intellectuals from all around the world. I think I have advantages in a medium-sized city, and it is possible for me to afford the apartment there, to settle into city life and to get upward mobility."*

As a form of symbolic domination, China's *hukou* system is found to partly inform the distinctions between passive and flexible habitus types. The role of *hukou* status in informing urban social classes concerns two aspects: On one hand, this urban-biased registration system economically benefits people who are in non-agricultural *hukou*

status. For this reason, on the other hand, in terms of habitus, although many rural-to-urban migrants are motivated to seek opportunities in cities, they still tend to be more conservative in decision-making and more anxious about the future.

Finally, deprived habitus type is linked to the social class of deprivation and marginalization. I thus use the term *urban lower class* to describe this class. Revealed by the results of the MCA in chapter 5, people of this urban lower class are more likely to be in a poor economic state, of a lower educational level and at an older age. Statistically, there are few Communist Party members in this social class. To be concrete, deprived habitus is incorporated by those without life chances in urban society, such as some of the rural-to-urban migrant workers and the laid-off workers.

Interviewees VIII, XI, and XIII exemplify this habitus type. Compared to passive and flexible habitus types, this habitus type is characterized more by a lack of knowledge of the market system. Interviewee VIII was a younger representative sample of this habitus type and its corresponding social class. He did complete high school. Although he has been working in Beijing for several years, he is confused about his future and without any concrete plan. During the interview, he complained that he came to Beijing to earn money, however, policies were absolutely unfair to migrant workers. I was also told that he didn't want to quit his current job, but he was aware that he had to.

As an elder rural-to-urban migrant worker without any educational background, interviewee XI has to earn money through unskilled construction labor. Registered in one of the poorest areas in China, he is the person without land in the village. He didn't complete elementary school and never accumulated any social respect or social ties. Fortunately, he is still in good health, which makes it possible for him to earn money for his retired life. During the interview, he constantly complained that life was unfair to him. Interviewee XIII who is a laid-off worker shares some similar traits with interviewee XI. She has been working a part-time job since she was laid off from a state-owned enterprise. Without any social relationships or respect, she didn't have any particular life goals, but just continued to save money for her retired life. Unlike interviewee XI, she was optimistic and didn't complain that Chinese government broke its promise on SOE reform. These two interviewees also completely placed their hope

on descendants, something out evident from the answers of other interviewees. At the same time, they were more willing to believe that it is very possible to achieve upward mobility in China.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Main Findings

This dissertation has tried to understand inequality under China's reform and its legitimacy based on a sociocultural framework. Within the framework, our main argument is that a legitimate system is a system of being reproduced. Firstly, sociocultural perspective stresses that humans tend to perceive domination, or social arrangements, in a way that reflects how they have learned from their experiences. In this sense, as a result of meritocratic competition, inequality is legitimized when it reflects a long-lasting order of domination. Secondly, with regard to a meritocratic society, inequality is socioculturally rooted in earlier times, as habitus signifies individual merit, which contributes to the reproduction of inequality. The earlier social structure that shapes the human perceptual process and behavioral tendency I call a *socioculture*.

The configuration of social structure in China is now characterized by meritocracy, as the reform and opening up establishes a system of rewards based on merits. Based on the presumption that the social stratification under China's reform is the outcome of merit but also reflects a longstanding order of domination, I have tried particularly to explore whether and, if so, how the inequality under reform is reproduced from the earlier established class boundaries under state socialism. In spite of the legacies of state-socialist inequalities, the introduction of the market force has differentiated the statuses of individuals with regard to resources of production, further characterizing the Chinese social structure by mutually antagonistic relationships (Weber, 1946; Parkin, 1972). This stratified society under reform is assumed to be, to some extent, expressed as a form of the state-socialist class system, otherwise, it wouldn't appear natural and be accepted by Chinese citizens as just.

These persistent state-socialist division lines exist as symbolic socialist class boundaries in the transforming society. Particularly, despite the initiation of economic liberalization, Chinese citizens are symbolically and hierarchically categorized as follows: non-agricultural *hukou* holders vs. agricultural *hukou* holders, Communist Party mem-

bers vs. non-Communist Party members, and employees inside the state system vs. employees outside the state system. Through multiple correspondence analysis of the individual and household data from the 2015 Chinese General Social Survey, it has been found that the social stratification under reform is partly reproduced from state-socialist hierarchical arrangements. Apart from this, the socialist hierarchical legacies manifest more evidently in rural society than in urban society.

Habitus theory, developed by Bourdieu, is utilized as a sociocultural mechanism to explain class reproduction in a transforming society. Habitus signifies the internalized logic of human practice that is shaped by structural relations within a sign system (e.g., Bourdieu, 1990b). Thus, I have conducted a series of qualitative interviews to construct habitus types within this hybrid sociocultural system and have associated those habitus types to social class under China's reform. The habitus traits acquired through the socialist hierarchical relations have been found in the form of an invisible and fractional mechanism in the stratification process under market reform. In particular, habitus orients an awareness of market force and state power among Chinese citizens, which signifies individual merit that affects socioeconomic attainments in this system. At the same time, it was found from the qualitative data that the strength of symbolic boundaries varies cross-regions and, in particular, that these boundaries are weaker in coastal regions and urban areas.

Four habitus groups emerged from the habitus traits elaborated on the rural-based interviews. These habitus types are: described as the determined, performative, pragmatic, and depressed, respectively. Of these four habitus types, the performative habitus type represents the behaviors affected specifically by the socialist class system, while the pragmatic one represents a practice acquired from the free market environment. The distinctions between these two practice modes contribute to the dividing line between the privileged class and the affluent emerging class in rural society. The determined habitus type signifies a practice that integrates valued capitalist habitus into the socialist milieus. This habitus group is more likely to be found among the village cadres in rural societies of developed regions. The depressed habitus type featured by fatalistic philosophy is a maker of the rural marginalized class, which constitutes the majority of population in rural China. This depressed orientation characterizes

members of the rural marginalized class powerless to change anything and dependent on the rural social security.

Five habitus types develop out of urban societies, they are the ambitious, the professional, the flexible, the passive, and the deprived types. The ambitious and the professional practices are the habitus types that absorb valued dispositions from both the socialist and the capitalist systems. These two habitus types are distributed in the middle (and upper middle) class of socialist elites and the aspirational middle (and upper middle) class respectively. The flexible habitus type develops out of economic liberalism and is mainly distributed among the rural-to-urban migrants who move from rural to urban areas for better lives. This habitus type is the maker of the marginalized working class in urban China. The passive habitus type denotes reluctance toward the shift to market competition, as this practice has been learned from the promise of a "job for life" under state socialism. This habitus type is the maker of the urban working class that constitutes the majority of the population in urban China. The deprived habitus is characterized by lacking valued traits in a transforming society, and contributes to the urban lower class that is mainly composed of marginalized rural-to-urban migrant workers and laid-off workers.

The findings of this dissertation interpret inequality as the unequal distribution of symbolic capital and habitus. Accordingly, the symbolic mediation of human practice is the structural root of inequality. The symbolically mediated habitus defines class as a self-perceived position in a structural relation, and matches interior group distinctions to exterior categories. In this sense, inequalities or group distinctions are viewed just and acceptable as long as they are expressed in the form of symbolic inequality. In a capitalist society, particularly, the maintenance of symbolic boundaries legitimizes inequality and makes it durable by merit.

7.2 Future Work

Four important questions remain and require further discussion following the work outlined in this dissertation:

(1) How are capitalist meritocracy and socialist socioculture intertwined with each other deserves more precise research. The higher education system that was destroyed

during the Cultural Revolution has been re-established since 1977. Afterwards, the Chinese Communist Party has been making innovative efforts to incorporate a series of merit principles in managing party and government system, in order to attract more intellectuals and professionals to serve the party and the country (L. Chen, Chan, Gao, & Yu, 2015). In this sense, it is worth working further on how merit selection merges with those socialist hierarchical designations.

(2) The top elite group in urban China is missing from the qualitative data. As a result, the habitus of these elites couldn't be directly observed, but it does need to be observed. Apart from this, the constructed habitus types and their contributions to social structure should be understood as dynamic processes in the future work. On the one hand, the dynamic interaction between the market force and state power may produce new sociocultural foundations in Chinese society. On the other hand, the longevity of the market economy may alter how people, especially the younger generation, perceive the surroundings, which will further affect how habitus groups are constructed and distributed.

(3) Some symbolic recognitions are neglected in this qualitative analysis, such as gender. The results of multiple correspondence analysis in chapter 5 reveal an association between gender and social class. Particularly, in rural China, men are more likely to have, or to have had non-agricultural work experience and to enter in to the emerging class, while women are more distributed in relatively lower socioeconomic conditions. Similarly, in urban society, men are more likely to be positioned in the middle class and above, whereas women are more likely to be marginalized. However, the quantitative results also suggest that social classes in both rural and urban societies are not characterized by gender. Given this, future work is encouraged to focus on the habitus distinctions between men and women, and to explore whether the different logics of practice contribute to different class situations in a transforming society. As a matter of fact, other forms of symbolic inequality, such as gender inequality and interethnicity inequality, also provide alternative sociocultural perspectives on inequality research.

(4) The contribution of education to inequality in China and its reproduction needs to be further studied. Both quantitative and qualitative results confirm that since the reform and opening up, education has had a very positive effect on the socioeconomic

achievements of individuals under market force and, to some extent, has weakened the symbolic mediation of practice to facilitate upward mobility. However, the fact is that in China, the compulsory education system took effect in 1980s, the national college examination system was re-established after the Cultural Revolution, and the stratification process happens in the educational arena almost at the same pace as in the social structure. Two subquestions thus need to be deeply investigated: The first concerns the effect of education inequality in China on social upward mobility; the second concerns whether or not and (if so) how the performance of Chinese citizens in educational institutions are symbolically differentiated. Additionally, in order to address the tension between the call for efficiency and pressure of social warfare, China has managed to decentralize or privatize public education over the past 20 years (Mok & Han, 2017). Whether the privatization of education highlights deeper problems of social cleavage in China is a question worth asking.

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